

Encounter

May 1980

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The Debunking of Captain Scott



A Critique of

Myths, Errors & Distortions
By WAYLAND YOUNG

*"I object to the debunker
as a son, because he maligns
my mother and her first
husband; as an owner of
archives because I gave him
access to them and he misused
them; and as an historian because
he has dishonoured that
essential calling...."*

Ralf Dahrendorf
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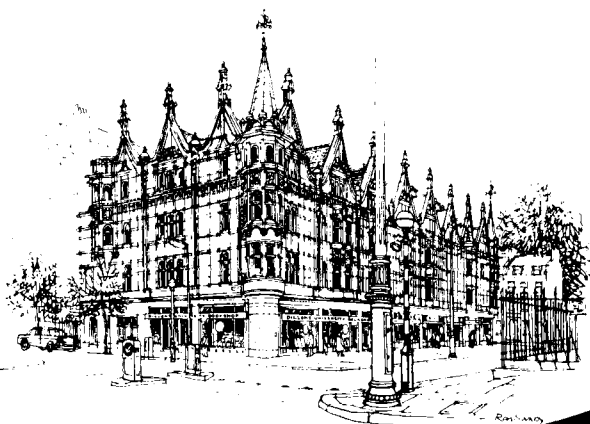
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John Wansbrough

Let Not the Lord Speak

“**W**E PRAYED FOR two nights and all of the day between. We had reached the end of our journey. At least we supposed we had, though we were not certain. And so we prayed. You can see for yourself the results. I have had to explain to so many who come here, traders like yourself, travellers and others who have heard and are merely curious. We are rather out of the way, don't you think? I know of course that you must pass near to us and that others will. It is, after all, the ancient silk route, and can as easily be used by car and truck, and for commodities more fashionable these days than silk. What indeed was the use of silk? It had, as you see, not much effect upon our community. But the machines you bring, and the pipeline which must one day dissect our narrow valley, may prove less ephemeral. It could even, in the end, change our way of life. Not so easy, however, as you might be tempted to think.

“Allow me, please, to describe the quality of resistance. You are, I know, longing to hear the story of our major attraction, but let me first describe our very peculiar landscape. From where we stand, atop the town hall, you see a bank of dull white sand, hardened to a slaggy crust. Easy going for vehicles like yours, but, let me assure you, hard on the feet. Beyond that is a ridge which, as you see, slopes away at a gentle angle, disappearing finally between two massive walls of light stone. At the top of that ridge lie rough cubes of basalt, erupted, it might seem, in the wake of some disorder in the remote viscera of the earth. Wait, I am coming to that. Of course I know why you are here, but do please observe the landscape. A drapery of black lava swirls its solid fold about the furthestmost of those cubes, washed away into a petrified infinity of shallow craters. See how the heat shimmers on the vitreous crust of sand. Gashed and whipped by brutal nature,

its surface evokes the turbulence of a choppy sea. Silhouettes of sandstone loom prognathously along the flanks of those two walls opposite.

“We call them birthmarks. Yes, in a moment I will explain why. But notice beyond the walls, through the narrow pass where they almost meet, how the sand flattens and diffuses softly into the horizon. There the crust is no longer solid, there among the fragments of basalt the loose sand lies waiting. Waiting for what, you ask? Indeed. Here we feel that it waits, not yet hardened, because this process, of which we are ourselves the material, is incomplete. Will it be? You mean, when will it be? That, I think, is a matter of prayer.

“Prayer, indeed that is our difficulty. We have prayed before, often, almost incessantly, and yet you can see for yourself what it has brought us. Now, if we were absolutely certain what we do when we pray, we should continue and thus permit completion of the process. Of what process, you ask? Even of that we are not certain, but surely you can understand why we might, just at this point, pause to take our bearings. You can? It could be fear, though we have never been a fearful people. To that our entire history is witness. Consider the expulsion and the flood, the bursting of the dam and the trek through the wilderness, the wars and the several destructions of our sanctuary, the siege and the long captivity. All that we survived. We had help, you say? Of course we had help: we prayed. And that is why we continue to pray, even when the answer is difficult to understand, awkward to accept. Tell me, do you pray? Perhaps you could show us how you go about it. It seems clear that something went wrong with our method. But let me continue: I know that you are anxious to be on your way.

“To begin with, we asked in our prayers for

a sign. What sort of sign? About that we had not agreed, but I thought at the time that it should be simply a sign of recognition. You know, something to assure us that we had reached our goal, that we had made the right move. But somehow things got out of hand, and we began to pray for more than that. We became demanding, insistent. I have no doubt now that it was a grave error, but after an arduous trek such as ours had been we expected some tangible reward, an explicit acknowledgement of our effort. It was all too easy then to suppose that a promise had been made, a contract agreed, and that we had now a moral, even legal, claim to recognition. To withhold the sign would be to break the promise. It is difficult to say where that kind of reasoning will stop. Does it ever stop? You think not. Well, I am inclined now to agree. Should it stop? You do not see why. There I would dissent. I suspect one ought, as they say, to let well alone. When is that? Precisely, my friend, but let me return to the story. We did ask for a sign. It seemed to us a simple enough request. What was it? I am coming to that. As you have perhaps heard, we were wanderers, required no more than pasture for our cattle and the chance to buy dates and cereals as we needed. There had always been people ready to provide these, more inclined than ourselves to the sedentary life. For our part, we elected to stay on the move. But we needed land for that, an area in which to circulate, to permit one grazing ground to grow rich while we used another, and so on, a kind of eternal rotation within our allotted sphere. It was, indeed, the vision of an undisputed allotment which got us this far, in fact to this very place. And it is here that betrayal of our heritage began. How? Let me try to explain.

“**WE** SOUGHT A TOKEN of acknowledgement, and so we prayed. And our prayer was answered. That mountain, of which you see only the peculiar ridge I indicated a moment ago, is the proof. It took some time: our petition was repeated for days, weeks, the reply was months in coming. You see, we asked for a mare in foal. Not so strange a request, really. We have for so long depended upon our camels, for meat and for

milk as well as for transport, that it seemed to us quite in order to ask for one which could satisfy our needs for some time, vast and fruitful, with no duty beyond the modest one of bolstering our confidence and serving our prosperity. Not quite so modest, you say? Well, to continue, that mountain began to rumble and to quake, like the volcanoes in the north. But rather than fire and molten rock, there was, as you see, some of that too, there appeared the enormous camel which we had invoked. An extraordinary beast, if you can imagine one whose udders were the height of a man from the ground, whose legs were as thick as mature palms, and whose hump was a mountain peak. And her mouth, her mouth was prodigious, but not quite a blessing, as we were soon to discover. She seemed docile enough and required neither to be hobbled nor tethered.

“And thus we waited for some months, gaping in awe, until she bore her calf. On holidays families would pack lunches and go to one of the dunes outside our encampment, just to sit and stare at her. Others did the same even on workdays, but that had of course to be discouraged. For there are jobs to be done during the week, such as mending saddles and tents, crushing and mixing grain, churning our milk for butter and cheese. So we waited, and at the end of her time, with considerable noise and effort, she was at last delivered. Now, as you may know, we usually tie up all but one udder for the calf. It was almost unbelievable. Her milk sufficed for the entire community. We had no need to call upon the other cattle, long since strained from too heavy a demand. Our new fortune was, however, not without blemish. The mare, even quietly grazing out there in the plain, frightened the others, who began to scatter, quite unlike our habitually complacent herds. That presented a problem, since parties had daily to be sent out after them, lest they wander too far and become, according to the law of the desert, another's property. But, as it happened, this was the very least of our worries. At intervals of three or four days the great mare drained every well on our land. You can imagine what that meant to us, since we need water as well as milk, for ourselves and for the other cattle. By an ingenious tapping of the beast's stomach we managed to repossess a good deal, and found we had in that way created a kind of portable

oasis. Convenient indeed for travelling. But, and here is the most significant feature of this extraordinary affair, it was no longer necessary. We still needed the water, of course. What I mean is its portability. For with the birth of the mare we took heart. It seemed to us that our petition had been heard, that we must at last have reached our destination.

“**O**F THAT THERE could hardly be any doubt, and I am bound to say that morale improved. We were eager now to prove our worth, to accept the challenge, to show that we had understood. All about we discovered an abundance of this porous stone upon which we are standing, not merely in blocks but also extending well below the earth’s surface. Now, though sober and industrious, we have never applied ourselves to making a permanent home. It is change of scene and freedom of movement we have prized most, though some would call us restless and idle. Perhaps you would? Well, let us agree to differ. It is, after all, only a matter of opinion, and I for one am a little dubious about the advantages of fixed domicile. But we were overtaken by events, or at least by our own interpretation of them. Observing everywhere this plentiful and workable material, we set aside, indeed nearly forgot, our tradition and began to dig. And by that I do not mean a leisurely scraping of the soil. No, not at all. We attacked it with great enthusiasm and some ingenuity. We dug and loaded and carried for years until, well, you can see for yourself the result. We built this city, hewn and terraced directly out of the rock. Impressive, you must admit. See how thick and strong these walls are, how sturdy the foundations, indeed, part of the earth itself. And observe, if you please, the security of our streets, and the enormous gates which permit the only entry through those ramparts. Substantial, you think? Almost eternal, I should say. And that, perhaps, is our very problem. Do notice how the city is laid out in quarters according to trades and professions. And the distinctive character of the residential quarter. Yes, we have taken to domestic life with fervour. Once hardly distinguishable from one another, we are divided now into groups and factions. There, on the right, you see the

smiths’ quarter, and beyond that the merchants, then the several professions, ending just below us with the jurists. You have not forgotten, I trust, that we are standing on the parapet of the town hall? It is here that we gather for news and municipal decisions, and for the ceremonies of which we have always been so fond. It is, indeed, here that we congregate for prayer, directly above the site of our first prayer. Auspicious perhaps, but ominous as well, I sometimes think.

“Yes, we continue to pray. Gratitude? Unfortunately not. More like bewilderment. Our evolution is not yet complete, you see, and we need guidance. Why incomplete? It may seem to you that we have achieved all we set out to, but we are not all that confident. You do not understand? Perhaps I can explain.

“Until a few days ago most of us were sceptical. A good healthy scepticism, mind you. None of your pusillanimous scruples for us. We were grateful for what we had been given, and proud of what we had ourselves accomplished. But, we asked, where do we go from here? We did not really know just what to make of our recent good fortune. Why do anything at all? Well, it was not so easy as that. Perhaps you have noticed, or rather, not noticed our great mare? Quite right, for you see, she is no longer here. We must, of course, forgo the portable oasis, but the wells at least are full and we want not for water. What happened to her? As I have said, most of us were sceptical. That might suggest that there were some in the opposite camp. Indeed there were, though they too, by their very expression of certitude, have now been compelled to admit that the majority was right. Not because it was a majority. It simply turned out that way. We decided, here in this building, our town hall and place of public worship, that we should gather again for prayer. But the recalcitrants, they were quite open, even vociferous, announced that further prayer was nonsense. What was wanted, they declared, was action. And action they provided.

“**T**HEY HAD GROWN WEARY of the mare, and they had reason. For, while supplying ample water, admittedly brackish but we are used to that, she continued to frighten away our other cattle, so persistently

in fact, that we had lost several hundreds to the unfriendly tribes around us. The herds were diminishing markedly, and we depend upon them for meat and for milk, the bulk of our diet. In their wish to avert the foreseeable disaster, this arrogantly assertive body took it upon themselves to kill the beast. We begged them not to. We convoked an assembly. We even went so far as to establish a twenty-four hour watch round her enormous shaggy bulk. But certitude has a way of expressing itself, even under the most adverse conditions. One morning we found the mare dead. The calamity was broadcast, and each of us came down to this portal to confirm it for himself. There was no doubt about it. She was quite dead, pierced in a hundred places with long, specially prepared arrows. Some, you see, were no amateurs when it came to certitude. They knew what they were about. Sad as the rest of us were, we were also determined to make the best of it, to salvage at least what meat we could and whatever milk there might be.

"Her calf was by that time weaned. What became of the calf? Patience, please, I am coming to that. Now, as we turned back to our shops for containers and cutting tools, we were stopped in our tracks by a deep rumbling of the earth, very similar to what we had known at the birth of our miracle. I am sure you have guessed, but do let me continue. Rushing to where she lay, we were in time to see the last of her sink back into the soil whence she came. A just conclusion? In the throes of death as in the throes of birth. The sand rolled over her, but without sealing completely into the hard crust which covers most of our region. Perhaps you will recall my pointing out that loose sand when I began my tale, not yet hardened, I supposed, because this curious process was incomplete. Well, our miscreants were apprehended and publicly dressed down. A light sentence, you think? What else could be done? There seemed little point in sentencing them to death, or even to prison. Their deed was accomplished, and destroying them could hardly restore the mare. You see, our destiny has always been collective, never more so than now, and it is assumed that whatever becomes of us will also affect them. Should that be punishment, they too will be punished. Should it be reward, we may even become convinced that it is the direct consequence of their deed. You can guess how humiliating it would

be to have punished them for what ultimately accrues to our benefit. Do you agree?

"And so we pray. As yet nothing has happened. Why do we continue? Well, you see, there is the calf. I trust you have not forgotten the calf? No, not below us, it's the low rumbling in the distance, like thunder. That is our calf. He will soon be as large as his mother. You heard it on the way? That was in fact what brought you to us? Nothing more than curiosity, then. Of course you know that the new highway circumvents our town quite comfortably. You need not have come at all. Everyone comes for the same reason, at least everyone I have met. Perhaps you had heard of our calf before you started? Then I must apologise for his being out to pasture just now. You may cross that ridge if you wish. He ought to be just the other side, no more than a two or three mile trek. But take care with your vehicles in that loose sand. Perhaps you will not try after all? Very well. Listen. There is the horn now, summoning to prayer. No, there is no hurry. We have a quarter of an hour to assemble.

"**A**PITY THAT you will not see our calf. The golden calf? Not quite, more like the sword of Damocles. Water and pasture vanish at a frightening rate. And he is beginning to menace the other cattle. One day perhaps he will wander off, though he has so far shown an alarming tendency to stay at home. Could we kill him? Hardly, the sacrilege of his dam's slaughter is still fresh. It has indeed been proposed by some, but it is the almost unanimous opinion of our community that we have sufficient blood now on our hands. Hence we pray, though prayer has not always prevented the rash act.

"See, they are beginning now to assemble, below us, just outside the entrance. The priest is not yet there. They cannot start without him, nor even without me. The decision must be unanimous. If we elect to kill the calf, we run the risk of another crime, an escalation of the first. For have we, after all, a right to destroy what we so ardently sought? It is not merely the sign, but the promise which is now in jeopardy, the very promise upon which we were ourselves so insistent. If, on the other hand, we preserve the calf, there is the growing

problem of water and forage, as well as the other cattle. Could we seek new pasture, as before? Think, my friend, of our magnificent city. It was at this spot that our destiny was fixed, here that the covenant was given. And consider what we have accomplished. Comfort, security, a bond with our land, all this despite the terrible crime. Alas, further wandering is out of the question. And are we not praying for guidance?

"The calf is the problem. So long as he is with us, the merchants and explorers, even the tourists, will prefer the ancient silk route. They

will no longer take advantage of the new road round the city. Willingly, eagerly they will leave it in order to see our calf. After all, he can be heard from almost everywhere. Have you not said so yourself? And some there are, you have conceded, who undertake their journeys with no other purpose. But consider the effect. Think of our city and our land, and the as yet unsullied water of our springs. Could we indeed survive? There is the priest now, I must hurry down to prayer. I do hope you will excuse me. It may well be, with just a little luck, that this time there is no answer."

Unrecorded Speech

She says "How was you?" Kissing. "Come on in, I'm all of a muck-sweat, having a merry-go-round; you've caught me doing my work."
She doesn't clean, but circumvents the dirt.
Chairs stand on tables—"All of a tizz-wozz."
Has that been spelt before? "A lick of paint", she says, propping her brush in turps, "freshens things up a bit." She paints the door and skirting boards; washes white window-veils. Houses, bedsitters, flats, extend herself. She makes the best of it, but likes a move; it's like a change of dress, changing address. I've lost count of the changes. "Home at last" is said too often to be credible.
We'll write it on her tomb, or jar of ash, unless she sees us out.
She says "The poor old lady" of someone no older than herself.
"She's gone a bit—you know dear—gone a bit doo-lally. Poor old thing. It takes all sorts—"
From childhood she remembers sparkling frost, and walking out in it in Christmas clothes—a coat her mother made her—vivid mauve—"so bright against the snow."
"And of a Friday afternoon the teacher read to us. That was the best." Stories have been essential food since then. *Peg's Paper*, H. E. Bates, Hardy and all except romances; "that don't interest me."
She fills her days "somehow", since Hubby died, but she has grown since then.
"All in a lifetime, dear", she says of death. Her words may be dead language soon; that's why I write them down. They will be heard "never no more", as she said at the birth of my husband, her only child, proving that double negatives mean "No."

Anna Adams

Wayland Young

On the Debunking of Captain Scott

A Critique against Myths, Errors & Distortions

THE KIND OF BIOGRAPHY which can conveniently be called debunking is as old as any of the others, or nearly; one can say it goes back to Suetonius. Successful debunking biographies may be ferocious lampoons, spat forth from political passion, like much of Suetonius himself, or giggly romps, like Voltaire's account of Joan of Arc. These will only be judged for what they are, namely not part of historiography. Or they may seek to set right what the biographer thinks is error of judgment or lack of courage in earlier biographers of his subject: Thackeray's *Four Georges* and Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* are the patristic texts in English. These books must indeed be judged as part of historiography, and must meet the normal tests of scholarship.

The good debunking biography requires first of all a subject who needs debunking, that is, one who has already been "bunked"—drowned in, or heaped up with, flattering bunk. To seek to debunk a subject who was indeed a hero and had been treated as such, or was not a hero and had not been treated as such, and who had thus never been bunked in the first place—this would be fruitless. The debunking biography also needs steady good humour. It may deviate into the feline, and it may certainly put its tongue in its cheek; Strachey is still the master under this heading. But the slightest taste of sourness or resentment will kill the project dead.

Since by definition it sets out to challenge accepted opinion, the debunker's scholarship must be not only as good as that of earlier biographers,

but must be above reproach. To assert that the subject had a worse character than he has hitherto been credited with requires chapter and verse. To assert that he did not do some of the creditable things he is generally believed to have done requires chapter, verse, and line. To assert that he did do some discreditable things which have hitherto been kept secret requires chapter, verse, line, and comma.

If the biography attempts to debunk the intrinsically undebunkable, if it falls into sourness or resentment, and if its scholarship falls somewhat below the general standard of its time and place, it is a literary failure. If, on the other hand, its scholarship falls very much below the general standard, it is another kind of failure as well, the nature of which I shall return to below.

SUCH A BOOK IS *Scott and Amundsen*, by Roland Huntford.¹ It is a double biography of these two great explorers. It is long, contains much Norwegian material hitherto unpublished in English, and tells some parts of the story convincingly and interestingly. All the world knows that the two explorers got to the South Pole within a month of each other, in the summer of 1911–12; that Roald Amundsen got there first and returned in triumph; and that Robert Falcon Scott got there second and died with four of his companions on the way back. But everybody who has paused to think also knows that if one was going to succeed and the other to fail it was likely to be that way round. Amundsen was the heir to a thousand-year technology of Arctic travel and had himself been brought up beside the Arctic sea and ice and snow—while skis had only been known to the English for about fifty years and Scott was brought up in South Devon. When that has been said the

WAYLAND YOUNG (*Baron Kennet of the Dene*) sits in the House of Lords and is a former junior Minister in Harold Wilson's Labour government. He is the author of many books, including "Preservation" (1972), "Existing Mechanics of Arms Control" (ed. 1965), "Eros Denied" (1965), and "Strategy for Survival" (1959). His famous article in *ENCOUNTER*, "Sitting on a Fortune", appeared in the May 1959 issue.

¹ *Scott and Amundsen*. By ROLAND HUNTFOORD. Hodder and Stoughton, £13.95.

different achievements of the two men have been sufficiently explained, and a good book could have been written comparing the actual course of their two enterprises.

BUT SUCH A BOOK, a real comparison between the two explorers, remains to be written since in Huntford's work Amundsen can do no wrong, and Scott no right. The reader is sometimes puzzled by this, but more often rendered incredulous. For instance, it has been very well known since 1913 that Scott told Amundsen and the world with perfect frankness what he intended to do, and that Amundsen deceived not only Scott but also Nansen, his own crew, and the whole world into believing the opposite of what *he* intended to do. Amundsen had borrowed Nansen's ship *Fram* in order to go one better than the older explorer. Nansen in *Fram* had drifted with the ice right across the Arctic ice-cap. Amundsen asked to have the ship in order to repeat the great drift, but on a course that would take him across the North Pole itself. At first this was his true intention but, when Admiral Peary got to the North Pole before him, Amundsen secretly changed it to an attempt on the South Pole; and for a whole year kept up the deceit. Scott went to Norway and tried to see Amundsen; but Amundsen would not see him, presumably to avoid having to tell any outright lies. Only when Scott arrived in Australia on his way to the Antarctic Continent did he learn the truth that Amundsen was hard on his heels.

Huntford describes all this carefully and at length, but seems quite unaware of the gravity of the objections which can be, and were, raised to Amundsen's course of action. To him, Amundsen was merely forced to take this course by the difficulty of raising any more funds for a different expedition after Peary had got to the North Pole. Any normal man, Huntford implies, would have done the same in like circumstances. Huntford concludes: "The main thing was, he *won*."

If Amundsen is a virtually unspotted hero to Huntford, then Scott starts as a ninny and ends up as a virtually unrelieved villain. In a way the most instructive, and certainly the most entertaining, parts of Huntford's book are the index entries for

the "characteristics" of the two men. Amundsen is allowed two defects: SHORT SIGHT and VANITY. Against this are set his LOVE OF ANIMALS, SENSE OF DESTINY, INTELLECT, CAPACITY FOR LEADERSHIP, LOYALTY, MAGNETISM, MODESTY, PHYSICAL FITNESS, SENSE OF RECTITUDE, SENSITIVITY, SEXUAL RETICENCE, SINGLEMINDEDNESS, and STOICISM. Scott is allowed one single virtue: LITERARY GIFTS. On the debit side:—

ABSENTMINDEDNESS, UNSUITABILITY FOR COMMAND, REFUSAL TO ACCEPT CRITICISM, BOUTS OF DEPRESSION, EMOTIONALISM, IMPATIENCE, BELIEF IN IMPROVISATION, SENSE OF INADEQUACY, INSECURITY, LACK OF INSIGHT, IRRATIONALITY, ISOLATION, JEALOUSY, DEFECTIVE JUDGMENT, FAILURE IN LEADERSHIP, READINESS TO PANIC, RECKLESSNESS, INSTINCT TO EVADE RESPONSIBILITY, SENTIMENTALITY, VACILLATION.²

The hero-worship of Amundsen, though it cloyes from time to time, is no great fault; he was a most remarkable man, so why not make the best of him? The hostility with which Scott is pursued is, on the other hand, painful. The contrast makes the biography intrinsically incredible. Nobody would have volunteered to serve on one dangerous and arduous expedition under such a boring and nasty little man as Huntford describes, let alone on two, as some of the key men did and were proud to. Many reviewers of the book have felt the painful effect of this hostility, and some have also seen the intrinsic incredibility.

A few, on the other hand, have swallowed it all, hook, line and sinker; that is to say they have accepted both that Scott was a boring and nasty



ROBERT FALCON SCOTT

² For completeness sake I should mention I have left "religion" out of Amundsen's list and "agnosticism" out of Scott's, because I can't make out which of those characteristics Huntford thinks the better. Perhaps Huntford's indexer had a sense of humour, because there is no other evidence in the book that Huntford has one himself.

little man, and that Huntford is the first biographer who has taken the trouble to unearth and reveal this truth. To keep within a tolerable length, let us examine only five of the very numerous discreditable things Huntford says about Scott and his friends: five of the most discreditable. I shall give them titles, thus:

- (1) Adrift for Eight Months;
- (2) The President of the Royal Geographical Society & the "Earthy Sicilian Boys";
- (3) The Berlin Hotel;
- (4) The Pathetic Little Gesture; and
- (5) The Death of Oates.

1. "Adrift for Eight Months"

HUNT FORD has this to say about Acting Lieutenant Scott.

"He then was appointed to H.M.S. *Amphion*, a cruiser posted to Esquimalt, the Canadian Naval base at Victoria, B.C. on the Pacific Station. She sailed from Devonport round Cape Horn on January 20th, 1889. On April 14th, at Octavia Bay in Colombia, Scott was lent to H.M.S. *Caroline*, a corvette, which was short of officers. He left her on August 1st, at Callao in Peru. A fortnight later he received automatic promotion to lieutenant. After that, he disappears from Naval records for some time.

"In fact, after leaving *Caroline*, he appeared in Guatemala City. There, he made the acquaintance of Addison Mizner, the son of the United States Ambassador. . . . To Addison, a raffish seventeen-year-old, Scott (just turned twenty-one), 'was the nicest, most thoughtful fellow I think I have ever known'. They sailed on the same ship to San Francisco, where Addison had been sent back to school. . . .

"Scott was introduced to Addison's sister Mary Ysabel, or Minnie, a somewhat flamboyant character. She was married to Horace Blanchard Chase, a wealthy Chicago businessman settled in San Francisco.

"Scott's relations with Minnie became warm enough to detain him in San Francisco and inspire her to write [some] verses in his address book. . . .

"But what happened at this time is obscure.

³ Admiralty Index: Public Record Office: ADM12/1200. The appointment could have been made by the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, before 16 September.

⁴ *Swiftsure's* Log.

Admiralty records are incomplete; they have almost certainly been pruned. There is the hint of an irregular trip home, the protection of a superior officer, and a cover-up. . . . The two indisputable facts in this case are that Minnie's verses, with their heavy intimation of the end of the affair, are dated March 20th, 1890, and on March 24th the log book of *Amphion* records Scott's return on board at Esquimalt, having apparently been adrift for the past eight months. It is an unexplained gap in his career."

Huntford's assertion that "he disappears from Naval records for some time" (meaning from 1 August 1889 until 24 March 1890) is untrue. It does not make very interesting reading, but I can see no alternative to setting the actual record out in some detail.

On 1 August 1889, Scott left *Caroline* at Callao, as Huntford states. He did not disappear. He took passage in the *S.S. Serena*, a Pacific Steam Navigation Company packet, as *Caroline's* log records. The main route worked by this company was along the Pacific coasts of North and South America, and nothing could be more natural than that he should break his 5,000-mile journey to Canada in order to visit Guatemala City, should resume it in company with young Mizner, and should break it again at San Francisco, meeting Mizner's sister there.

On 12 August, the Admiralty received an application for an additional Lieutenant or Sub-Lieutenant from H.M.S. *Swiftsure*, and recorded Scott's appointment on 16 September.³ The battleship *Swiftsure*, then Flagship of the Pacific Squadron, was based like *Amphion* at Esquimalt on Vancouver Island, and that is where Scott would have spent his time in her. On 28 January 1890, *Swiftsure* left Esquimalt and steamed south to San Francisco, where she stayed from 6 February to 15 February and then left for South America.

On 6 November 1889 (while Scott was carried in *Swiftsure*) *Amphion* in thick fog had run on the rocks outside Esquimalt with the Governor-General of Canada on board. She limped back the same night and was in graving dock for seven months. On 3 March, the Commander-in-Chief in *Swiftsure*, then at Acapulco in Mexico, received a report from *Amphion* that her repairs were taking longer than expected because of the extreme cold.⁴

I have failed to find any record of Scott's discharge from *Swiftsure*, but it seems not unreasonable to suppose that he was granted leave in San Francisco about 15 February and that this leave ran, or was extended, until 24 March, since he

was not needed by a ship in dock. If Minnie Chase dated her verses correctly, and if she wrote them in his book while he was still in San Francisco (she may have sent it on after him), then Scott made the journey back to Esquimalt in four days, which is fast, but not beyond a warship at the time, and he may well have taken a passage in one. He reported for duty at 0900 on a Monday, which is a normal enough time to report back after a normal leave.

The record of Scott's career kept at the Admiralty⁵ shows that throughout this period his official appointment was to *Amphion*. He was appointed first on 21 December 1888, was discharged on 14 August 1889 when promoted Lieutenant, was reappointed the same day, and continued in appointment until 1891.

Throughout the same period, the Navy List (which appears at quarterly intervals) also shows him in *Amphion*.

The moves to *Caroline* and *Swiftsure* would have been decided at station level and approved, or merely not objected to, by the Admiralty. This distinction between formal long-term appointment to the strength of a ship and actual short-term postings to other ships on the same station was common form, and especially so in the case of very young officers like Scott.

Huntford's allegation that "there is the hint of an irregular trip home, the protection of a senior officer, and a cover-up" reads in the context of the quotation given above as if it applied to "this time": that is, the "missing eight months."

The only trace of *any* trip home between 1888 and 1892, irregular or not, is as follows. The Admiralty record of Scott's career reads: "26 May 1891 to return to England to arrive not later than 1st July 1891 (see also Orders of 6th June 1891 as to return home about the middle of September to qualify for torpedo duties". This is a year after the end of the "missing eight months" and contains no hint of irregularity, the protection of a superior officer, or a cover-up. The reader will have noticed that in the passage quoted above from his book, Huntford gives no references for any of his assertions.

NO ONE COULD DOUBT that "Admiralty records are incomplete." They are maddeningly so. And confused, repetitive, internally inconsistent, and ungrammatical . . . and haphazardly weeded according to no visible principles. But they are none of these things to a greater extent in the

record of Scott's career than they are in the record of other officers of that time. The statement that "they have almost certainly been pruned" suggests that there has been a special cover-up. Such a suggestion should not have been made without evidence.

Anyone working fast on a big book can be forgiven (though not excused) for missing entries in a voluminous and disorderly archive. But no one is entitled positively to assert the absence of any entry from an archive which he has not fully searched. To base discreditable allegations on such an alleged absence is disgraceful.

2. The President of the Royal Geographical Society & the "Earthy Sicilian Boys"

SCOTT'S PRINCIPAL BACKER for both his expeditions—the story is told in all the biographies—was the President of the Royal Geographical Society, Sir Clements Markham. It was Markham who insisted that the two British expeditions to the Antarctic should be naval ones, and, at least in the case of the 1901 expedition, that Scott, a far from obvious choice, should be the leader. Thus it was Markham who made Scott; and a biographer is right to examine his character in relation to Scott's.

Here is Huntford.

"In 1844, at the age of fourteen, [Markham] entered the Royal Navy as a cadet, leaving prematurely seven years later, in hazy circumstances. . . . Though married, with a daughter, Markham was a homosexual. He sometimes went south to indulge his proclivities safe from criminal prosecution. He liked earthy Sicilian boys. At home, he kept his affairs decorous, or at least discreet."

And later, of a young man called Cyril Longhurst, whom Markham made secretary of Scott's first expedition:

"Scott, however, did not quite trust Longhurst, because he was not only another of Sir Clements' nominees, but one of Sir Clements' homosexual attachments into the bargain."

These assertions are not in Huntford's book for nothing; they are there as preparation for the following passage on how Scott actually got his command in 1901. Although "Sir Clements, who went by appearances, usually preferred blander,

⁵ P.R.O. ADM/42. fo. 501.

epicene good looks to Scott's sensual features", yet Scott,

"of whom a companion once said that there was nobody 'man or woman who could be so attractive when he chose', knew how to play up to the susceptibilities of older men, and soon found favour in Sir Clements' eyes."

FIRST, as to the "hazy circumstances" in which Markham left the Navy. There is nothing in the least hazy about his letter to his parents dated "Sept 24th" (probably of 1851) "80 miles north west of Cape Wrath." In it he wrote clearly and firmly, as any young man might write to his parents, of his desire and intention to leave the Navy as soon as he got home. He wasn't suited, didn't like it, didn't think he would succeed in it, and intended to go to Oxford and get a degree and be off his parents' hands as soon as possible. The letter is in the main Markham collection at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

Huntford gives no sources in his book for the statements about "Sicilian boys", and Longhurst. But Canon Gervase Markham, a collateral descendant, has asked him for his evidence, thinking that there might be some personal recollections or secret documents unknown to the family. Huntford cited certain passages in Sir Clements' Diaries, which are also deposited at the R.G.S. When Canon Markham checked these passages, he found no grounds whatever for the allegations. I am grateful to him for permission to publish the entries, and I acknowledge a general debt to him in what follows about Markham.

Sir Clements Markham's diaries are a perfect treat of Victorian scientific sensibility. Wherever he went, even on holiday in such a well-explored place as Sicily, he made brilliantly clear little drawings, almost like enamel, of views and sites, and maps of his walks, and of the coastline. He recorded topography, fauna, flora, temperature, wind direction, hydrography, geology. He drew details of capitals in the cathedral, and noted the genealogy of prominent families, and whether their younger sons had obtained good degrees, and the time he got back to the hotel for lunch. There is no hint in them whatever of "indulging proclivities"; they are drenched in a sunny, even naïf, appetite for the details of real things. At the same time he poured out an almost preposterous fountain of papers and pamphlets, books and lectures and reviews on everything under the sun.

The first diary entry Huntford has cited as evidence of Markham's earthy homosexuality is

that of 11 May 1890. Markham, then 60, was on holiday at Taormina in Sicily with his wife. He had his copies of Theocritus and Pindar with him. He went for a walk

"to the South towards Etna. A handsome lad overtook me, in hide sandals and Phrygian cap, with pipes on which he played. We talked while our ways were the same, then he struck off up the mountainside. He did not give me his stick, but hinted at the price of a cigar, yet he reminded me of Lycidas in Theocritus. I got back at 12. Later a walk with Minna [his wife] to the S. Walls."

Theocritus was probably a native of this part of Sicily, and in any case spent many years there. It was natural enough for a Victorian savant to be reading him in Sicily. Now, what of Lycidas? In Theocritus' seventh Idyll, which is probably his best-known poem, the poet is walking through the hills with two of his friends. They meet a goat-herd called Lycidas, who carries an olive-wood stick. There is some general chatting about the relative merits of urban and bucolic poets: Theocritus himself (wearing the name of Simichidas) and his friends stand for the urban values, the goat-herd Lycidas for the bucolic ones. The poet and the goat-herd each sing or declaim a short poem about heroic or mythical lovers, and about tragedy and nature. Then they part, still laughing and joking. Lycidas gives Theocritus his olive-wood stick, and goes one way; Theocritus and his two friends go another. That is all.

Now as to Longhurst. Here Huntford cited to Canon Gervase Markham diary entries about a journey that Sir Clements Markham, with Cyril Longhurst as his assistant or secretary, made to Denmark in 1892. Markham's diaries note:

"The Danish ladies are full of admiration for the young man, and find him 'so handsome, so pleasant, and simple minded', he has had a warm invitation to come here again."

The diaries also record how sorry Markham was to lose him when he had to return to England. Markham sometimes called Longhurst by the nickname "Pamphilus." It is hard to guess what Huntford thinks Pamphilus means, but most people would probably agree with Canon Markham that to an Old Westminster of that era it could only mean one thing. Pamphilus was the hero of Terence's *Andria* which was regularly performed at Westminster School as their annual Latin Play. It had been put on eleven times since Markham first entered the School, and as a devoted Old Boy and

President of the Old Boys Association he must have frequently seen it performed. Terence's Pamphilus was a young man who in the end successfully marries the heroine; he was by no means homosexual. It seems a natural and pleasant nickname to give a young man.

As to Scott's distrust of Longhurst because he was "one of Sir Clements' homosexual attachments", Huntford quotes (still privately; there is nothing in his book) from a diary entry of Scott's:

"Breakfast with Sir C. Markham. Sad to see the last of the Grand Old Man and his companion Longhurst."

To this, Mr Huntford adds the comment:

"*Companion* is the significant word in context."

The implication that Scott obtained his command by physically charming the allegedly homosexual Markham is given no source in the book and, as far as I know, Huntford has not quoted one privately either. The source was perhaps his own "intuition" to which I will also refer.

3. The Berlin Hotel

FRIDTJOF NANSEN, as we have seen, was the elder explorer from whom Roald Amundsen borrowed his ship and whom he deceived for a year about his intentions. He was also the doyen of polar exploration at that time. He later became neutral Norway's special representative in Washington with ministerial rank during World War I, and after it was Commissioner for Refugee Affairs and Famine Relief for the League of Nations. Huntford does not differ from earlier writers in his favourable judgment of this Norwegian hero.

Mrs Scott, born Kathleen Bruce, was a sculptor. Huntford holds her, if possible, in even greater aversion than her husband, making her out to have been bi-sexual, a feminist, a calculating adventuress, but on the shelf when Scott married her, and a woman so fascinating that the Board of Admiralty obeyed her whims in its major appointments. All of these things he regards as unpleasant, and in all of them he is way off the mark. She was notoriously intolerant of women both in general and in particular, and was strongly and idiosyncratically opposed to women's suffrage. Scott had a most passionate rival for her hand, the novelist Gilbert Cannan.⁶ And so on.

⁶ See, Diana Farr, *Gilbert Cannan: A Georgian Prodigy* (1978).

But these are minor points: the small change of shoddy craftsmanship. In his book Huntford states:

"By a melodramatic improbability, Nansen and Kathleen Scott had been having a love affair while Scott was on the Southern Road. It was consummated in a Berlin hotel while Scott was facing defeat at the Pole. . . ."

Nansen's letters to Kathleen Scott survive; hers to him do not, though her diary does. It is clear Nansen was in love with her; it is clear she was very much smitten by him; and it is clear they were both in Berlin in January 1912. Nansen was lecturing. She went there with and at the suggestion of an American lady called Mrs Deverreux; the latter was travelling with her daughter Aileen and with the portrait painter Harrington Mann, who was painting Aileen. The journey had some of the outer signs of an intrigue; Mrs Scott stayed in the same hotel as Nansen, though she spent most of her time either with the American family or with her cousin, Benjie Bruce, who was an attaché at the British Embassy.

Nansen's letters, starting in 1911 and continuing till his death, do not bear out Huntford's assertion. His very first (surviving) letter sets a tone which endured. He wrote in English:

"Ah, life is really sometimes very, very strange, and not as simple a thing, perhaps, as some people like to think. For you your splendid husband and baby are above everything in this world, and will remain so, and still that does not prevent the possibility of a friendship that may make life richer, at least it is something giving happiness to another who sadly wants it, is it? But remember, I may disappoint you, I am perhaps not much worth knowing, a difficult, heavy character, accustomed to live alone and wander my own ways, and no good company,—and yet sometimes I feel as if the boyancy [sic] of the boy was still left, though hidden. How good you are to say that you do not believe that our possibilities if tested would have proved a disappointment. No, really, I cannot believe it either, nor that they need now; and we will be careful. . . ."

There followed the Berlin meeting, and then Nansen wrote: "The oasis I was so keenly looking forward to is left behind. But certainly I shall not complain, and have no right to." And four months later (18.4.1912) "I *do* long for your letters, more than I will tell you; tho' you say you must hear every five minutes that one likes you. I suppose that is very womanly. But perhaps men too like to hear

such things." Throughout these letters he never uses the word "love."

Again, five years later (22.9.1917) from Washington: "How would it be to meet again, I wonder? We were always so wise; would we be it now? One never can tell, though perhaps one can."

KATHLEEN SCOTT'S DIARIES at this time were written for Captain Scott to see when he got back. She had earlier been a copious letter-writer, but had only kept sporadic diaries. During her husband's absence the diary became one great continuous letter, full of day-to-day news, with an absolute minimum of reflection. The habit was formed, and she kept it up after she knew her longest letter would remain for ever unread by the man it was meant for.

It gave a detailed account of the development of her friendship with Nansen; of their meeting (at a lunch where H. G. Wells was also a guest), of how he launched at once into a most revealing conversation about Amundsen and the *Fram*, of how a few days later he lunched with her and kissed her hand when he left, and of how she had "an amazing letter from Nansen." Her judgment by then is that "explorers are fine fellows." There follows a detailed account of their stay in Berlin, again full of conversation about Amundsen, which ends:

"He really is a most adorable person and I will tell you all the lovely time we had together when you get back. He thinks you are marvellous, and me still more."

PROBABLY A MORE CAREFUL and certainly a more objective reading of these letters and diaries would have prevented Huntford from making his assertion. But there is even stronger evidence which should have restrained him.

In 1922, ten years after Scott's death, Lady Scott, as she then was, married Sir Hilton Young, a Liberal M.P. He later became Lord Kennet; and they had one son, the present writer. In 1938 my father was sorting papers and, since she had taken me (then 15) skiing in Switzerland, corresponding with her about them. Besides sorting, he was having letters which were especially interesting (or came from people who seemed likely to be of historical interest) bound for preservation's sake. He did all this because of the imminent War and the likelihood of London being bombed. When he came to the Nansen letters, he wrote to ask what she thought should be done with them: bind them all up together? or leave aside those which Nansen could

have been blamed for writing during Scott's lifetime? She answered, in two letters, the relevant part of which is as follows:

"I have only half read the Nansen letters. How it brings it all back. I think if anyone read *carefully* they would see that it was *not* an affaire à outrance, but of course if anyone read one or two letters only, and did not notice that he says definitely that he wanted things he didn't have, and that he understood why, and yet I had said on the last night that I was sad about it—but of course it needs reading carefully. Also my letters ought to be there saying how I wouldn't have come to Paris if he was coming only to see me because I was going to remain a completely faithful wife—only I was not going to throw aside such a divine friendship. Oh my dear, how glad I am I didn't; looking back, how glad I am. I even wonder whether I wouldn't have been more of a feller if I had had no inhibitions. I don't know. 26 years ago. You know he really was a very grand person. I am entirely proud of my friendship."

The second letter, written when she had finished the reading, does not modify the message of the first.

WHEN ROLAND HUNTFORD'S BOOK came out, I published the above extract in *The Observer* (14 October 1979). Huntford, in a statement in the same issue, claimed that he did not know of these two letters. So I wrote to *The Observer* the next week saying:

"The letters are in the same envelope in the Cambridge University Library as the Nansen letters to my mother from which Mr Huntford quotes in his statement. They are separately listed by the catalogue as being in that envelope. It is written on the outside of the envelope that it contains not only Nansen's letters but 'two letters from [Kathleen Kennet] about Nansen.' Huntford had that envelope brought to him on 2 February 1976 and had its entire contents, including my mother's letters, photocopied on 3 June 1976."

Huntford wrote to *The Observer* the next week, saying that he had not read the letters when they were photocopied (in June 1976). He disputed neither my description of the cataloguing, nor that he had had the envelope out to read in February 1976. In the course of his statement to *The Observer*, Huntford said:

"Moreover, there are intimate details in Lady

Scott's private diaries which leave one in little doubt as to the nature of the affair."

Assuming, as one is bound to, that by "doubt" Huntford means doubt about its guilty nature, this is hardly likely to be true about a diary written for a husband in 1912, and in fact it is not true; there are no such details.

I do not know whether Mrs Scott went to bed with Nansen; like Huntford, I wasn't there. I have read her own statement; and I have a certain conviction about the matter, based on twenty years knowledge of a human being and on intuition; but things like that do not give one the right to make assertions. Huntford asserts that she did, without mentioning her statement that she did not—a statement which he held in his hands on 2 February 1976. I am writing here about nothing but Huntford's scholarship, and am content to leave the reader to judge it.

HAVING PROVIDED Kathleen Scott and Nansen, against the evidence, with an *affaire à outrance*, Huntford has to get them out of it. He does so by having Nansen tire of her.

"Kathleen Scott, with her egregious self-dramatisation, was a woman of whom one easily could tire.⁷ The affair died."

Back to the facts. All this was in 1912. In 1917 Nansen was still writing in a way which encouraged Kathleen Scott to think of going to Washington, even to contemplate marrying him. Later again, nine years after they first met, her diary records the following (9 May 1919):

"Did some sensational wax casting at the foundry. Got home to find Nansen had telegraphed and also telephoned 3 times. He arrived suddenly by aeroplane. As Col. Stirling was there waiting for me and expecting to take me out to dinner it was all rather fussing. Nansen was leaving the next morning so I had to send J. [Colonel Jack Stirling] away and arranged for Nansen to dine here. It was an awful evening. First all right, for he talked about his plan for feeding the Russians, if the Bolsheviks will agree to cease hostilities. Personally I fear Lenin will not but Nansen is hopeful and on getting reply will start immense Scandinavian organisation and go himself to Russia. Then later we had our personal relations out. It's quite absurd from my

point of view. He is 57 and—well I am not. This lady who has left her husband for love of him is 48. She is kindly and nice and has loved him for years and she is his nationality. Eminently suitable. Poor Fritjof, he is very deaf and rather childish. I wish I could be of some help. Nothing would induce me to throw in my lot with him. He just declines to contemplate any other solution to his madness, but it's all right; as the madness wanes other solutions will present themselves without my having to force them. I merely watch with cold scrutiny."

And in fact he did marry the kindly and nice lady of the same nationality. They all met in Paris in 1921 when Sigrun Nansen wrote to Kathleen Scott to thank her for some sweets and to say: "I think I am very fond of you." Nansen and my mother remained friends till he died. In real life people even now sometimes do fall in love, carefully avoid going to bed together, propose marriage seven years later, and remain friends ever after. Between 1912 and 1930 they quite often did.

4. The Pathetic Little Gesture

THE MAIN PURPOSE of both Scott's expeditions was the scientific study of the Antarctic continent. But when expeditions are not fully financed by governments the appeal of a "first", then as now, often reinforces scientific objectives in creating public interest and so raising more money. Scott's priorities are shown by the increased emphasis on science of his second expedition, and its larger scientific staff, many of whom had distinguished scientific and academic careers afterwards. The scientific reports of both expeditions produced 32 major volumes of results. I think all but one of Scott's earlier biographers have understood this.

There is no entry in Huntford's index under "SCIENCE" or "RESULTS, SCIENTIFIC" or, come to that, under meteorology, geology, glaciology, ornithology, oceanography, ichthyology, photography, or any other field Scott's or Amundsen's expeditions tackled. But there are one or two places in the text where he comments on Scott's scientific results. He goes along with the judgment of *The Times Literary Supplement* of 1908 that the meteorological observations of 1901–4 were wasted because they failed to distinguish between "true and magnetic compass bearings." Actually the doubt applies only to one set of wind-direction records, and the uncertainty was fully reported in

⁷ This sentence, which is taken from the bound page proofs circulated before formal publication, was later removed.

the first publication of the expedition's results. Moreover, there are other sets where there is no doubt; and the doubtful set fits very well with them if one assumes the bearings were true, and very poorly if one assumes they were magnetic.

A better qualified view than *The Times Literary Supplement's* of the value of the meteorological results of Scott's expeditions is the account given by Professor Gordon Manley of the work of Sir George Simpson, who was the meteorologist on Scott's last expedition. (Simpson became Director of the Meteorological Office in the 1920s.)

"The volumes in which his findings were digested (1919–23) remain as an outstanding example of the accomplishment of an able physicist, who, with the help of his lively colleagues, notably the late Griffith Taylor, set up his instrumental programme and carried out an astonishingly full series of meteorological observations. With the aid of two, sometimes three, reports, including those kept by Amundsen, he drew his weather maps. With twelve balloon ascents and Erebus smoke, he developed theories of the atmospheric circulation over the whole Antarctic, and his active mind took up the major problem of the maintenance of the continental ice sheet."

Journal of Glaciology, Vol. 5, 1965, p.873

The interesting point here is the use for science of Scott's and Amundsen's records *together*. But such things do not attract Huntford's attention.

Huntford refers jeeringly to the geological specimens Scott's party collected from the moraines of the Beardmore Glacier on their way back from the Pole, which were found still on the sledge beside their dead bodies. They could not, he says, have been of any value, since Shackleton had already been that way in 1909.

"They had dragged those thirty pounds of rock to show themselves martyrs to Science; a pathetic little gesture to salvage something from defeat at the Pole and the wreck of their hopes."

It is difficult to get the feel of the now forgotten lacunae which determined the thrust of scientific research in an age before one's own. At the time they were obtained, those rocks (second sample though they might be from a suite already sampled by Shackleton) were, taken with Wilson's careful descriptions of the banding on the outcrops from which they had come, among the most precious data which could possibly have been obtained for geology from anywhere in the world. The most famous and perhaps the most important of all these data (though Huntford does not mention it) was the

fossil plant *Glossopteris* which dramatically demonstrated the geological connection between Antarctica and the other continents. Alexander Du Toit in his originally derided but now acclaimed "*Gondwanaland*" books of the 1930s drew heavily on the Scott expedition's samples in demonstrating this connection, and thus building the theory of continental drift as we now know it and accept it.

The overall scientific achievements of Scott's expeditions are not belittled by scientists. It is enough to remember that Ferrar and Debenham's formulation of the sequence of Beacon rocks is still referenced today; and that Wright and Priestley's classic *Glaciology* was the first real textbook of its subject when it appeared in 1922, and remained in use till after the Second World War.

Scott and his men had no doubt they were on a scientific expedition, even though many people at home kept forgetting this at the time. But it is strange that seventy years later, in a supposedly more scientific age, a biographer can obtain serious attention for a book which almost entirely ignores the main purpose of its protagonist's activities, and what little it does not ignore, traduces.

The best judgment remains that of Sir Raymond Priestley in 1956:

"As a scientific leader give me Scott; for swift and efficient polar travel, Amundsen; but when things are hopeless and there seems no way out, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton."

Priestley knew Amundsen, and had been South under the command of both Scott and Shackleton.

5. The Death of Oates

PERHAPS THE BEST KNOWN TABLEAU in the traditional iconography of Scott's last expedition is that of Captain Oates, weakened beyond chance of survival and knowing that the only choice left for him in this world was to reduce or not to reduce his companions' chances—of Captain Oates going out of the tent into the blizzard with the words:

"I am just going outside and may be some time."

Now Oates, perhaps because there is criticism of Scott in his letters and diaries, is Huntford's hero. Moreover, the Old Etonian cavalry officer apparently possessed all the upper-class virtues which the middle-class Old Dartmouthian lacked.

In his account of Scott's last expedition, Huntford appears gloatingly obsessed with Oates's

unfavourable judgments of the expedition's leader. Others might wonder whether there had ever been an expedition or even a ship where no one had hard feelings about the captain. Throughout the chapter headed "The Ultimate Defeat" Huntford's attitude to his subject is one of mounting hatred. Scott himself deserved to die because he was so incompetent; but he ensured that at least two of the others also died, so as to avoid comparisons; and the death scene he stage-managed to make an impression on gullible and nationalistic posterity.

Huntford describes the progress of Oates's illness, and quotes Scott's diary: "Poor chap! poor chap! It is too pathetic to watch him." On this Huntford comments:

"Poor Oates, indeed. He sat there in the tent, with Scott staring at him, with the unspoken expectation of the supreme sacrifice. . . . Alone among them Oates had been to war and faced death in the field. . . . He was playing to no audience; he clutched at no heroic delusions. He was a brave man. Coming second—especially to someone like Amundsen—was a disgrace with which he, at least, could live. . . . After Amundsen—'that man must have his head screwed on right'—he could see how he had been betrayed by bad leadership. He had never wanted to go to the Pole; he had been ordered there against his wishes. There was no reason why he should give up to oblige Scott—yet."

Huntford goes on to doubt that Oates ever used the famous phrase: "I am just going outside and may be some time" because though Scott reported it in his diary, Wilson did not report it in the letter he wrote to Oates's mother.

"Where independent testimony exists, Wilson is always reliable. Scott, however, was preparing his alibi."

And later:

"Mrs. Oates [Oates's mother] . . . was perhaps going too far when she called Scott his 'murderer', but that Scott was responsible for his companions' deaths, was evident. For public consumption a story was contrived. . . ."

Now it is quite true that Oates criticised Scott in his letters to his mother; he criticised him uninhibitedly for his decisions about how to handle ponies in the Antarctic. It is hardly surprising. Scott knew nothing about ponies, and Oates knew nothing about the Antarctic. Much of this criticism Huntford quotes with relish. But Oates was also given to frank criticism of his other colleagues in

his private letters (for instance:—"I can't stand that — — — chap; he is both dirty and lazy")—and these Huntford does not quote. And in the same letters Oates showed how well he knew his own propensity, and how much he wanted to ensure that even his mother, who presumably knew him almost as well as he knew himself, should not be misled by it. For instance:

"... I admit I am annoyed at his not having taken my advice more freely about the marches."

And again:

"Please remember that when a man is having a hard time he says hard things about other people which he would regret afterwards."

These passages Huntford does not quote.

AS TO THE ASSERTION that Oates did not want to go to the Pole, and was ordered to against his wishes, here is Oates's account of the matter, once again in a letter to his mother.

"I have been selected to go on to the Pole with Scott. . . . I am of course delighted. . . . I am afraid the letter I wrote you from the tent was full of grumbles."

Huntford does not quote this last sentence.

When Scott recorded Oates' last words, he prefaced his grand and transparently sincere encomium of his comrade with the words: "I want the following facts to be known." Despite the vehemence and formality of this language, Huntford gives him the lie on the sole ground that the words were not recorded by one of the other sick and exhausted men in the tent.

Enquiry has been made into the source for the meaning look from Scott which Huntford says sent Oates to his death. It was on a television programme (*Nationwide*, BBC, 8 October 1979) and Huntford was both prompt and frank about his source. The interviewer asked:

"Mr Huntford, you even go so far as to suggest that Scott really forced Oates into making the supreme sacrifice in walking out into the snow with those famous words. You talk about him staring at him with unspoken expectation. How do you know? What evidence have you for that?"

Huntford answered:

"As a biographer, one has to use one's intuition, one has to interpret now and then, and knowing

from my understanding of Scott's character and from my understanding of the training of the Royal Navy at that time, and from my understanding of Oates's character, I am satisfied that this is the case."

This is as frank an admission as one could expect from any writer. Huntford knew from his intuition. He was satisfied, not by any documentary evidence, not even by a contemporary hint or allusion or expectation; he was satisfied by his own understanding. To be satisfied by one's own understanding—to be convinced by one's own intuition—is not the procedure of a scholar; to be satisfied by those means that a man long dead was a villain and not the hero he had been taken for is the procedure of a novelist.

No reference is given for the statement that Mrs Oates called Scott her son's murderer; and it is not to be found in the only collection of Mrs Oates's letters which appears in Huntford's general source list.

I HAD INTENDED ALSO TO DEAL in detail with certain passages concerning the death of Scott himself with his two remaining companions, Wilson and Bowers, and particularly with the following:

"Scott's right foot had been frostbitten, and he was almost unable to walk. Now he was the drag on the party, and in the predicament of Oates. Wilson and Bowers, in marginally better shape, prepared to set off for the depot and fetch food

and fuel. Something stopped them; it is not clear what.

... the storm is unlikely to have been as fierce or unrelenting as Scott suggested. ... Scott himself probably held Bowers and Wilson back. ...

"Scott would have to answer for the men he had lost.

"Shackleton would have the last laugh.

"That was something Scott could not face. It would be better to seek immolation in the tent. ... Wilson and Bowers were persuaded to lie down with him and wait for the end. ...

"They wrote their last letters, believing they would be found some day. That indeed was the argument that Scott probably used to persuade Wilson and Bowers to lie down and wait in the tent."

Reading the words of straightforward regret, of honest loving-kindness and in places of blazing charity which the Christian Wilson and the stoic Scott wrote of their lost enterprise as their deaths approached—and they are our only source—I found I had not the heart to set those words, which are after all very well known, beside the ones I have just quoted above. Perhaps the reader will excuse me if I simply say there is not the smallest hint or shadow in them which could give colour to Huntford's version; no more than in the other episodes. It was agreed that Bowers and Wilson should leave Scott and try for the next depot if the weather eased; and it didn't. That's all.

Theatre News

SCOTT'S tragic failure to beat Amundsen to the South Pole is the subject of a new play in this year's Chichester Festival. "It doesn't lob half-bricks at Scott but it is not entirely complimentary," said Peter Dews, the Festival's artistic director who will be directing the play.

The play, "Terra Nova," which has the approval of Scott's son, Sir Peter Scott, is apparently a good deal less critical of Scott than the recent book about the expedition by Roland Huntford which, according to Sir Peter, despicably maligns his father and his mother.

Written by a young American, Ted Tally, who has drawn heavily from Scott's diaries, the play is largely set in the tent in which Scott and his companions met their deaths just 11 miles from the next base camp.

Scott is being played by Hywel Bennett, Oates by Peter Birch, Evans by Christopher Neame, Wilson by Martin Sadler, and Bowers by David Wood.

Helen Ryan is Kathleen and Benjamin Whitrow Amundsen.

DAILY TELEGRAPH (London)

6. Conclusion

THESE FIVE EXAMPLES are simply a first batch of discreditable allegations for which I have examined the documentation; it bore none of them out. There are many other allegations of the same sort in Huntford's book, the documentary support for which I have not yet examined.

The sources for a person's life are the truth about him; there is no other truth. In so far as the person's life is important to posterity for its achievement, its nature, or its example, good or bad, they are part of the web of truth and reality which will make posterity what it is. In learning we devise ourselves. In teaching we influence others. In giving access to archives, in writing biographies, in publishing them, and in reviewing them, we contribute to the creation of people. It was in this sense that the distinction made at the beginning of this article was intended. A biography based on moderately poor scholarship may just be a bad

book, a literary failure. But one based on distorted scholarship (of which unsupported assertions are the extreme form) can harm society as a whole, since it gives people a false impression of a part of reality.

Telling falsehoods about the living also gives a false impression of a part of our reality; but the living can correct it themselves. The law of libel gives them every help. It does so only to avoid the personal harm that befalls them from this cause, not in order to prevent society from getting a false image of itself in general. Since the dead are beyond personal harm the law of libel does not extend to them, even though the general harm of society's distorted self-image arises as much from a "libel" on the dead as it does from a libel on the living.

Can one desire or even imagine a law which would make it a tort or an offence to create a distorted self-image for society by stating falsehoods about the dead? Obviously not. Arbitrary authorities of one sort or another would use it to declare false all self-images but their own, and to force their own down everyone's throat.

There is, in short, no general defence against falsehood but the integrity of scholars and writers; and in the long run this usually holds up well enough in a free society. When it breaks down, as in the kind of widely noticed biography of which Huntford's book is an example, the breakdown restricts freedom of information not only directly by excluding the truth for a time, but also indirectly and perhaps more seriously by its effect on the actions of owners and controllers of archives.

It is not very easy for "families"—meaning all those, normally descendants, who own either the substance or the copyright of records useful for biography—to protest after a book has been published. To begin with, the general feeling still seems to be (as it was when Lytton Strachey first made debunking fashionable 60 years ago and opened the door to writers less careful and less able than he) that a protesting or objecting family is bound to be wrong and the writer is bound to be right. I tended to think that way too, leaning towards any biographer, until recent events.

If after considering this general feeling the "family" still inclines to protest, it has to face the next deterrent to setting the record straight—it will merely increase the sales of the book. Might it not be better to let a worthless or faulty work reach its natural sales, and fade out of memory with its errors uncorrected? Many families do keep quiet about what they know is a misuse of the sources they have made available, either for fear that their intervention would be written off as mere outraged piety or affection and its factual content be therefore ignored, or for fear that they will increase the currency of error. Or for both fears.

Even if they still decide to try to correct the errors they may not find it easy to do so. Not every family contains persons who have the skill and can find the time to search an archive, write an article, and get it published. Some are better equipped than others.

Those families who simply want to avoid the hassle and distress will be tempted to close their collections to all enquirers or even to destroy them; and that this fairly often happens there can be no doubt. But such a course is no less a distortion of the truth than the falsehood-ridden biography it seeks to avoid. Those with a sense of what history is and how society derives from it (and how what is good in a society can be fostered by dwelling on what is good in its history) will not follow that course. They will probably follow common sense and common decency as best they can, and impose on those who seek access to their records certain restrictions. These can only be troublesome to biographers and archive-owners alike.

I WILL TAKE LEAVE to end this article with a personal observation. I object to Roland Huntford's book as a son, because he maligns my mother and her first husband; as an owner of archives because I gave him access to them and he misused them; and as an (occasional) historian because he has dishonoured that essential calling and put its raw materials at risk, not only for himself but for others.

Anthony Hartley

The Barbarian Connection

On the “Destructive Element” in Civilised History

“When by the conquest and annexation of every rich and cultivated province, the measure of empire is full, two parties are sufficient to comprehend mankind; that of the pacific and wealthy, who dwell within the pale of empire; and that of the poor, the rapacious, and the fierce, who are inured to depredation and war.”

ADAM FERGUSON: *An Essay on the History of Civil Society.*

WRITING during the last quarter of the 18th century (but before 1789), Edward Gibbon, the historian of the Roman Empire’s catastrophe, not unnaturally was led to ask himself, in a famous chapter, “whether Europe is still threatened with a repetition of those calamities which formerly oppressed the arms and institutions of Rome. . . .” The Romans were “ignorant of the extent of their danger and the number of their enemies”, but “the reign of independent barbarism is now contracted to a narrow span.” Rome too had lost “national freedom and military spirit”, but, in 18th-century Europe, “the abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame . . . and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times.” Moreover, military improvements had made civilised countries less vulnerable to attack by barbarians:

“Europe is secure from any future irruption of barbarians; since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous.”

It was impossible to imagine that the achievements of civilisation in the arts and sciences could be lost:

“We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion that every age of the world has increased and still increases the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race.”

Some ten years earlier, in 1774, however, a German philosopher, Johann Gottfried Herder, in a brilliant essay, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (*Another Philosophy of History for the Instruction of Mankind*) had taken a different view of the durability of Europe’s enlightenment. His bitter sarcasm makes a piquant contrast to Gibbon’s measured satisfaction which, however, is not without its own element of irony. Herder’s phrases have a modern ring about them as he parodies the complacent cant of his day:

Heil uns! zu Aufrechthaltung des Gehorsams, des Friedens und der Sicherheit, aller Kardinaltugenden und Glückseligkeiten, Söldner! Verbündete! Gleichgewicht Europas! Es wird und muß, Heil uns! ewige Ruhe, Friede, Sicherheit und Gehorsam in Europa bleiben.¹

(Hail to all of us! mercenaries and allies in the European Balance of Power! We represent obedience, peace, security, all the cardinal virtues and happiness. Tranquillity, peace, security and obedience—thanks to us!—will and must remain for ever in Europe.)

To Gibbon’s reasoned certainties he opposed an apocalyptically romantic vision of the flow of history with civilisations rising and falling into the ruins on which their successors would eventually take root. History was “destiny” of which mankind was at once the object and the instrument. In his passionate tirade Herder did not assign any cause to this alternance of creation and destruction. Unknown to him, however, an attempt had already been made four hundred years previously to explain the rise and fall of civilisations—a theory which, moreover, had as its central feature that onslaught of external barbarians which Gibbon and other historians after him have regarded as responsible for the destruction of the Roman Empire, but which also appeared excluded by the

¹ J. G. Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1967), p. 91.

changed conditions of the modern age.²

The North African historian Ibn Khaldûn, generalising from Arab history, had seen the driving force of historical change in the repeated overthrow of the civilised dwellers in towns and oases by the more warlike nomads of the steppe and desert who, having become peaceably sedentary in their turn, would then themselves be conquered by a new wave of barbarians. Whereas Gibbon regarded 18th-century civilisation as being in control of its own future, Herder (and before him, Ibn Khaldûn) saw all civilisations as subject to destruction. Where Gibbon thought that "barbarians" were no longer a threat to an enlightened Europe, for Ibn Khaldûn the existence of such external destructive forces was an integral part of the historical process itself.

IN 1980 NO DOUBT we must incline towards Herder's view of history as a magical force whose manifestations in reality are dynamic, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous. The 20th century has been distinguished by a series of disastrous historical ups-and-downs, and there is no reason to suppose that it has shot its bolt yet. Contemplating the past 80 years one can only echo Valéry's comment after the first World War: "*Tout ne s'est pas perdu, mais tout s'est senti périr. . .*" It would be difficult to return to any very firm confidence in the likelihood of human progress, though during the halcyon 1950s and '60s voices were to be heard promising a future in which the wonders of technology would solve the problems of mankind, and the year 2000 see the opening of the ultimate toy-cupboard for peoples trained to expect the benefits of a combination of political democracy and industrial positivism.

More recently such prophecies—even from the direction of the Hudson Institute—have been muted. If the year 2000 is mentioned, it is rather to deplore its approaching terrors than to exult in its achievements—a change which, in itself, goes some way towards proving Herder's point about the irrational flow of history. Within the last few years

a political and economic system which had functioned with great success over some two decades has begun to break down under the pressure of forces which few experts had taken into their calculations. The Western industrialised world (and for this purpose Japan has to be included in this convenient term) appears to be losing control of the political and economic environment in which it exists and, consequently, to be perilously close to the disappearance of the minimum of stability which it requires to function at all.

In these circumstances reflection on the disintegration of civilisations is not out of place; and, since the threat to the system in which we live seems to come from political and cultural forces outside it, it is also not entirely irrelevant to ask what significance the cyclic theory of history proposed by Ibn Khaldûn may still have for us.³

IS THERE ANY modern equivalent for Gibbon's "irruption of barbarians" or for the process of the rise and fall of civilisations described by Ibn Khaldûn?

If this is seen as taking the form of a massive movement of peoples (*Völkerwanderung*) establishing themselves in cities and cultivated lands by their superior military force, the answer must be "no." The last occasion on which anything of this kind took place was during the Russian advance into eastern Germany during the last months of World War II when the linguistic boundary was changed, and what had been German lands became Slav. There are, of course, movements of population taking place today—there appears to be a general trend of migration from poor countries into their richer neighbours—but these do not resemble organised assaults with the aim of subjugating or replacing the original inhabitants and the consequences for the level and continuity of culture which this would imply. Gibbon was probably right in thinking that Europe would not see again anything like the piercing of the Roman *limes* by the peoples from beyond the Rhine and Danube. As for Ibn Khaldûn's view of world history, it was formed by the exceptional circumstances of North Africa where the nomadic tribes of the Sahara have always pressed hard upon the cultivators of the oases and more fertile borders of the desert, their military superiority consisting traditionally in their mobility and capacity for endurance.

However, there may well be a more general application of Ibn Khaldûn's central theme which has nothing to do with the shifting movements of

² The latest historian of the later Roman Empire, A. H. M. Jones, gives it as his opinion that "it was the increasing pressure of the barbarians, concentrated on the weaker western half of the empire, that caused the collapse." A. H. M. Jones, *The Decline of the Ancient World* (1966), p. 370.

³ Toynbee's *Study of History*, of course, develops a general (and questionable) theory of historical cycles. Here I am simply concerned to point to a contemporary phenomenon which might be thought to resemble a "barbarian influence." Again, there is the question of those who attack the values of a civilisation from inside.

tribes or villages flaming in the wake of camel-mounted warriors. The key to it lies in the meaning we attribute to the word *barbarian* or, rather, to the phenomenon which it represents. The definition given by the Oxford English dictionary is *a foreigner*, then, by a natural transition, *a rude, wild, uncivilised person*, the word being derived from the ancient Greek where it indicated inability to speak Greek properly. Applied to peoples, *barbarian* indicates that they do not participate in, and, indeed, are probably actively hostile to, the political, social, and cultural system within which the speaker or writer exists. The traditional idea of barbarians overthrowing the Roman Empire implies on the part of historians like Gibbon an identification with classical civilisation and a conviction of its superiority to that of the peoples who pierced its defences. This conviction may or may not be correct, though those who believe in the values collectively described as “European civilisation” must presumably share it. In fact, many barbarians (a Theodoric) shared it themselves (others did not: the Caliph Omar, for example). The point, however, is that a barbarian is essentially an “outsider” who, whatever he may come to borrow from the society into which he intrudes, nonetheless imposes his own values upon it—values which are seen by members of that society to be different from, and ultimately destructive of, their own.

NO ONE, OF COURSE, thinks of himself as a barbarian, nor does the term necessarily imply cultural inferiority, though it is also used with that implication. To take a 19th-century example, it would be hard to say that either of the two officials, Charles Elliot or Commissioner Lin, who confronted each other in Canton at the beginning of the Opium War between Britain and China, was culturally inferior to the other. Elliot and his successors, however, played the traditional role of the barbarian by imposing on the Chinese Empire a rationality different from its own and finally fatal to it. It was

the fact that Western imperialism was alien to the societies with which it came in contact that enabled it to achieve so much, but that also disintegrated the social and political structures upon which it imposed its will.⁴

The essential quality of the barbarian—the man from outside—is, therefore, that he is different, so different as to bewilder his opponent and to exclude any appeal to common values. But for this strangeness to impose itself upon another society to the extent of disrupting it, the barbarian must be able to dominate his prey either by military power or by political will. Military power is not necessarily enough in itself. Ibn Khaldūn’s nomads possessed superior military power merely by virtue of their way of life, but they were assisted in their task of conquest by the defects of their sedentary adversaries.

“The things that go with luxury and submergence in a life of ease break the vigour of the group feeling, which alone produces superiority. When the group feeling is destroyed, the tribe is no longer able to defend or protect itself, let alone press any claims. It will be swallowed up by other nations.”⁵

To take another example, the technological advantages of Cortés and his men, their guns and horses, do not seem to have played so great a role in their disintegration of the highly organised, if bloody, Aztec Empire, as their political assurance and their barbarian ability to pass over taboo and precedent. For it is quite rare for barbarians to possess more advanced technology than the societies they attack. For the most part this has occurred when Europeans, with their tradition of scientific rationality, have intruded on societies holding different values from their own. Seen from this point of view—necessarily that of the conquered—the process of colonisation was one of successful incursion by political barbarians, though the values they brought with them may have been objectively more humane, or more capable of adapting the physical world to human needs, than those of the systems they replaced.

Usually, however, incipient disintegration in the society under attack has played a great part in the barbarians’ success. Indeed, it would be hard to maintain that the Roman Empire was inferior in military technology to the tribes from beyond the Rhine and Danube. At the height of Roman military power the dykes would have held. But the political, social, and economic crisis of the over-extended Empire (already foreseen by Polybius in the 2nd century B.C.) helped the invaders to bring

⁴ The history of British rule in India is full of instances of the enormous advantage which accrues to an invader whose motives and behaviour are completely unexpected. To break taboos, to do what has never been done before—these are recipes for political and military success. They are also characteristic of the barbarian invader in the sense which is basic to the word politically and which is being used in this essay. (The misunderstanding also has its tragic side as anyone who saw Satyajit Ray’s recent film *The Chess Players* will know. Here Outram played the part of barbarian.)

⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (1967), Vol. I, p. 287.

about the collapse of the Western empire.⁶ Whether Gibbon's hint that the disintegration of the Empire was partially brought about by the advent of Christianity be unfair or not, it seems to be accepted, to take one instance, that the Arab conquest of the Middle East was powerfully aided by the discontent of the Monophysites with the orthodoxy imposed from Constantinople. The Roman Empire was, no doubt, too large and contained too many disparate peoples for any common system to hold it together, but the clashing identities of different regions and ethnic groups must be presumed to have found a channel of expression in the theological disputes that marked the progress of Christianity. In some sense "barbarism and religion" were responsible for the final catastrophe—provided that "religion" be defined to include the political and social changes arising out of transcendental belief.

HOWEVER THIS MAY BE, it would appear that one important advantage of the barbarians over the civilisations successfully attacked by them is that their will is more coherent and, therefore, stronger. Barbarians know what they want; nor are they moved by a desire to understand the motives and problems of others. Refinement and civilisation bring with them a certain relativity of judgment, a measure of scrupulousness, as well as the destruction of social cohesion described by Ibn Khaldūn. Barbarians are not hampered by any wish to preserve the system that they will replace. The defenders of civilisation have so much to lose that their very measures of self-defence suffer from it. They are responsible; those who confront them are irresponsible. Thus the physical freedom of action of the barbarian, symbolised most strikingly by the hardiness and mobility of nomadic tribes, is complemented by a more important freedom from moral constraint which enables him to act without heed of the consequences for those who do not share his own rationality.

THUS WE ARRIVE at a definition of "barbarian" as someone whose values are different from those of the civilisation to which we happen to belong and would be destructive of them were they

to intrude into the political and social system which that civilisation has created. Such an intrusion may take place either through sheer power or else invited by division and disintegration in the society under attack.

In a sense, indeed, the damage inflicted by a barbarian upon the society into which he intrudes can be said to be accidental. His purpose is not to destroy that which he touches. The destruction stems rather from his capacity to assert his own alien values—something which, in itself, is not illegitimate, however fatal the consequences for those who do not share them. He is not *engendered* by the society which he assaults. He comes from outside it, and, in this, he differs from figures like Hitler and Stalin to whom the epithet "barbarous" has been justly applied, but whose real nature is more that of a microbe in the bloodstream of the societies they infest. For it cannot be said that such tyrants or the systems which they helped to produce were foreign to the course of German or Russian history. They can more justly be compared to a hideous excrescence on the body politic, a monstrous exaggeration (but not a suspension) of the laws that govern its organism. National-Socialism and Russian Communism were both deviant forms of European history, but, unfortunately, some of its characteristics can be recognised in theirs. Both Hitler and Stalin fall into the category of the "terrible simplifiers" which Burckhardt, drawing upon his profound knowledge of the past, foresaw as a self-inflicted wound of European civilisation, and of which examples had existed before—a Robespierre or an Ivan the Terrible. And for every "terrible" ruler how many terrorists who would avenge themselves upon the societies which bred them, were they always allowed to do so?

Thus, though these deviant forces of Western history may be called "barbarians" or "barbarous" through a metaphorical use of the term, they do not fall within the definition discussed above. They are the malignant freaks of a civilisation which weaken it in its resistance to outside attack, but whose internal origin is only too evident. The "barbarian factor" does not include the barbarians we produce at home. It is a phenomenon which, in itself, is less sinister though ultimately it may prove more fatal to the civilisation on which it impinges.

⁶ Polybius's analysis of the rise and fall of empires is remarkably similar to that of Ibn Khaldūn: internal disintegration coming about through the spread of luxury, the consequent clash of individual ambitions, and class warfare as those further down the social ladder strive to gain their place in the sun.

THE DEFINITION I have offered above which makes of "barbarians" one of the dynamic forces of history must naturally be pejorative when viewed from the angle of the threatened civilisation, whose

members will normally consider their values superior to those which are about to replace them. However, it will be so only if we regard the immutability of our own civilisation as a good in itself. But can we so regard it? Would an eternally enduring civilisation, petrified in its virtues and its vices, be tolerable? Would it give scope for the exercise of human possibilities or room for the fulfilment of human aspirations? If we adopt Herder's perspective of the ebb-and-flow of history, it becomes difficult to place such giant upheavals, marked by a transformation of political, social and cultural values, in categories such as "good" and "bad." Most Europeans in the late 20th century believe what is called the "open society" with its mixture of parliamentary or presidential democracy and mass industrial organisation to be "good" and alternative systems to be "bad." Still it is highly unlikely that 20th-century European conceptions of what is politically and socially desirable will endure for ever, or even for very long. What we regard as characteristic of our civilisation will pass away and be replaced . . . by what? . . . and whence? All that can be said here is that those belonging to a given civilisation must defend its values, however conscious they may be that ultimately its doom will be pronounced—is being pronounced—by historical change. Such an attitude may be tragic (and human dignity is involved in the acceptance of tragedy as a part of life). Yet it avoids the flattery of history, the servile desire to join the winning side.

IF WE ACCEPT Herder's vision of the succession of civilisations which, for him, composes history, should we also find relevance in what has been called "the barbarian factor", held by Ibn Khaldūn to be the prime mover in this alternation of rise and fall? What signs of such an influence can be detected today? What we are seeking is not so much symptoms of decline in our present situation, which are fairly obvious, as whether among their causes can be numbered any process analogous to that described by Ibn Khaldūn and dismissed by Gibbon.

For it is fairly clear that the world system created after the Second World War is breaking

down. This system, conceived under the banner of "interdependence" and symbolised by an institutional panoply (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, etc.) of impeccable Western rationality, was based on a belief in the efficacy of a combination of political democracy and industrial efficiency—a belief largely gestated in the United States. The "American Century", as it was called by Henry Luce, was to inaugurate an era of world history founded on an instinctive faith in the virtues of the democratic way of life developed in America and in the possibilities of their application to other countries and peoples. This faith was accompanied by a dynamic and melioristic rationalism which held that the world's political and economic problems could be solved by international cooperation and the application of solutions based on Western technology and economic organisation. Nation after nation was to reach the point of economic "take-off" (to use W. W. Rostow's term), and accompanying this process would be the establishment of Western democracy, social equality, and the rule of law.

It was an intelligently rational picture which dominated for some twenty years the thinking of those who took an optimistic view of international affairs. During those years the world made great strides in material wealth and social improvement, and the same image still lurks like a beneficent phantom behind the efforts of statesmen to cope with growing chaos. The onset of its disintegration in the early 1970s was marked by two major political events: the defeat of the United States in Viet Nam and the crisis brought about by an enhanced consciousness of their own power on the part of members of the Organisation of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) who, for historical reasons, share the resentments of Asian and African countries against the western industrialised world.⁷

The effect of the Viet Nam war was to remove the main prop of an international system which had been supported by a belief in American power—what Denis Brogan used to call "the illusion of American omnipotence." No other Western country could replace the United States in this role. International stability required a calm and continuous exercise of American power. But after Viet Nam, the United States was to embark on a long masochistic ritual during which, like some latter-day devotee of Cybele, it brandished the severed instruments of its potency in the hope that the world would applaud the morality of its proceedings. The world was not impressed; and the conclusion was drawn that little need be feared from a military power fettered by

⁷ It is significant that it should have been a political event—the Arab-Israeli war of 1973—which caused the oil-producers to become conscious of their own power. It was essentially Arab nationalism, rather than mere economic motives, which produced so striking a demonstration of the political leverage exercised by the oil weapon as was given in 1973.

political constraints and by the discredit into which the Presidency of the United States had fallen after Viet Nam and Watergate. In Viet Nam itself, in Angola, in the Horn of Africa, American inability to maintain the balance of power (and the inability of any other Western country or group of countries to replace America) meant the spread of chaos or the advent of governments distinguished by their hostility to Western countries. In Iran, America singularly failed to support a régime which had been its close ally and for whose past conduct it had been, at least in part, responsible. No doubt, other Middle Eastern rulers have drawn the appropriate conclusions. Meanwhile, though we have not yet seen the consequences of the disturbance of the balance of power in the Persian Gulf, the internal collapse of Iran has been reflected in an intensification of the energy crisis.⁸

BOTH THE American defeat in Viet Nam and the energy crisis can be described in terms of the "barbarian factor" whose relevance we are investigating. Without going into the history of the Viet Nam war, it is widely admitted that Hanoi's victory was a triumph of political will-power and relatively simple military techniques over the abstruse strategic planning and sophisticated technology of an advanced industrial society. It is not too much to say that the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam imposed its own rationality on its opponents and, in so doing, undermined their military effectiveness. Similarly, as we shall see, the energy crisis owes much to the willingness of the oil-producers to disrupt the world economic system for political ends and regardless of the consequences to themselves of such disruption.

It is symbolic of the present situation that the Western espousal of "Human Rights", elevated by President Carter into a major element of American foreign policy, should have come at a time when such values, inspired by Western humanism, are being more and more widely repudiated. Talk of "Human Rights" is a poor substitute for the ability to further them; and a year that has seen (*inter alia*) the summary disposal of large numbers of political figures in Ghana and Iran, the massacre of school children in the Central

African Empire, the restoration of the full rigours of the Islamic penal code in Iran and Pakistan, and the long calvary of the Vietnamese "boat people" bears no very convincing testimony to the efficacy of peaceful moral exhortation. The moralising which has always accompanied American (and, to a lesser extent, European) foreign policy has become a substitute for power rather than its symbol.

A growing indifference in Africa and Asia to a tradition of Western humanism—which had been imposed, first by European colonial powers as they spread their influence throughout the world, and, more recently, by the United States in the name of the "American Century"—is not very surprising. Indeed, it is only part of a more general alienation from Western political and social beliefs and a return to indigenous forms of government and society. One-hundred-and-fifty years of alien rule (or less in many cases) could hardly be enough to produce a lasting transformation in habits of behaviour and thought acquired over previous millennia. Extreme cases apart—and figures such as ex-President Amin and the ex-Emperor Bokassa seem to have reproduced some of the more unpleasant characteristics of the traditional African paramount chief—it seems that more and more countries are developing types of régime which owe less and less to the "rule of law" and the "respect for individual rights" which, on the whole, have presided over recent constitutional developments in Western Europe and the United States. Internal struggles for power, quarrels with neighbours, economic collapse, the persecution of ethnic minorities, the revival and successful proselytising of a religion such as Islam—all these things are carrying the societies of vast areas of the world on a divergent course from the polity of the great industrial countries which are so dependent on a rational world order for their survival and prosperity.

THERE IS NO OCCASION for moral judgments here. The rationality of a Western-inspired world order may well not be suitable for countries whose experience and values are very different, and which are held together by a type of nationalism, emotional in its appeal and most easily stimulated by a consciousness of common enemies. Peoples, we must believe, have a right to choose for themselves the values which are to inform their societies and to arrange their institutions accordingly. There is no substitute in history for making one's own mistakes, however terrible the cost may

⁸ The Russian invasion of Afghanistan seems, for the moment, to have brought about a re-entry of the United States on to the world stage. It remains to be seen whether the lesson will have a permanent effect. At least it will have dispelled some illusions about the nature of the Soviet Union and its foreign policy.

be. Or, rather, there is a substitute: submission to the will of others, acceptance of an *imperium* in return for the establishment of a peaceful international order—a *pax Romana* or *pax Britannica*. But such empires, we are told, are gone for ever. . . .

However, it is also true that the present world economic system—the result of what is called the “interdependence” of its various participants—does require from them an acceptance of its inherent rationality if it is to work. Those whose actions can affect the system for better or for worse must possess a certain similarity of outlook. If they do not have as their primary motive the mutual benefit to be derived from its proper functioning, the feeling that “self-love and social are the same”, then it will break down.

For “interdependence” implies that even quite a small disturbance in some sensitive area of the world will be multiplied by instantaneous communication to countries far removed from it geographically and by the defensive reaction of electorates, trained to recognise a threat to their standards of living, yet unprepared for the sacrifices required to parry it. The effect of such events, taking place in a country connected by the devices of advanced technology to a network of world communications, is felt immediately along all the nerves of a system constructed to react quickly to possible disaster—a reaction which discounts, rather than prevents, its consequences. Technology, as well as economics, has united the advanced industrial countries to societies which do not necessarily share their rationality.

I have already noted that, in the past, the barbarian conquerors of a civilisation did not always possess a military technology superior to that of those they attacked—in some cases it was markedly inferior. Now, however, technology, the offspring of Western scientific rationality, has been communicated far and wide. In Iran a Moslem leader can appear to call the faithful to prayer holding an automatic rifle in one hand and a microphone in the other (instead of a sword and the Koran). Such a development not only multiplies the consequences of political disorder by increasing the dependence of societies on complex mechanisms which can only continue to work in conditions of civil order, but also puts powerful and easily handled weapons into the hands of fanaticism and xenophobia, while the virulent assertion of national and religious values is conveyed by radio and television throughout a national community. Technology, divorced from the restraining rationality which gave it birth, is an anarchic and destructive power.

ALL THIS WOULD matter little to the industrial countries, were there no dependence upon those whose values are different from theirs. But, whether we like it or not, they are part of the system on which the prosperity of the industrial world rests. In such a world of complex mechanisms and acute sensibilities any threat to the supply of oil (or any other vital raw material) must send thrills of pain to the most distant parts of the system. But this does not seem to concern some of the leaders of the OPEC countries overmuch. In fact, it is unlikely that a desire to keep the world economic system turning over takes a very high place among the aims of the Ayatollah Khomeini or Colonel Gaddafi. They have their own objectives—presumably including the attainment of paradise—and care little for the damage they may do to the devices by which economic man lives in the late 20th century, even though their own peoples would suffer from the collapse of the world economic system. Judged by their own lights it is hard to say that they are wrong to take the view that Moslems have taken for hundreds of years. Western rationalism cannot refute premises similar to those which presided over the rise of European civilisation or condemn a nationalism which is still an integral part of the ethos of the nation-state in Europe, North America, and Japan. But the results of such a state of mind are clear. Economic motives weigh lightly when an issue such as that of “Palestine” is thrown into the other scale.

MOREOVER, political chaos can have at least as disastrous an effect as deliberately hostile political action. The Iranian example shows what can happen when atavism is mingled with social disintegration in an area joined to Western industrial countries by their necessities, if not by its own choice. Nor is it hard to imagine what other countries might be drawn into the Iranian vortex. All the signs are that, in the next decade, political upheaval in the Persian Gulf will continue to be reflected by economic crisis in America, Europe, and Japan. Moreover such upheaval may well have a wider impact. The political and strategic balance between the Soviet Union and the United States, itself the product of sophisticated reasoning, will not remain unaffected by the intrusion of new, ill-understood and, hence, often unforeseen motivations into the arena where the two super-powers confront each other. The attempt to rationalise the relationship that forms the main balance of world power risks being upset by forces which will affect

the vital interests of one or the other super-power while remaining heedless of the consequences. It will be difficult to maintain the present uneasy "balance of terror" if other political forces are prepared to cause a shift in world power without regard to the trial of strength they are initiating.

THUS WESTERN INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES find themselves affected by a "barbarian factor" in the sense defined above. Intruding into the nicely balanced system through which they live are strange forces, whose motives do not include any very strong desire to see them prosper. Their rationality is being eroded by another rationality, different in its premises, whose power is increased by the very capriciousness of its application. Against such caprices, against the still greater uncertainties of political conflict and chaos, they are disarmed. Residual fear of what the United States might do if roused has largely vanished in the aftermath of the Viet Nam war and the mist of moralising which hung over Washington (at least until the Afghanistan crisis). No government would have dared to take American diplomats hostage before the Viet Nam *débâcle*, and the present crisis, which has perceptibly increased the possibility of war, can only be considered as the direct result of that defeat. As for Europe, it has not succeeded in developing political power appropriate to its economic importance and may, therefore, properly be considered by those of firmer purpose as a tempting prey rather than a redoubtable adversary.⁹ Whatever may be the case in the future, for the time being it certainly has no control over events which are threatening the livelihood of its peoples and, ultimately, its survival.¹⁰ In the Iranian crisis European countries have not precisely rushed to the support of the United States. No doubt, they hope that this cup will pass from them. But it will not.

GIBBON'S VIEW of Western civilisation, capable of continuous self-improvement and undisturbed by

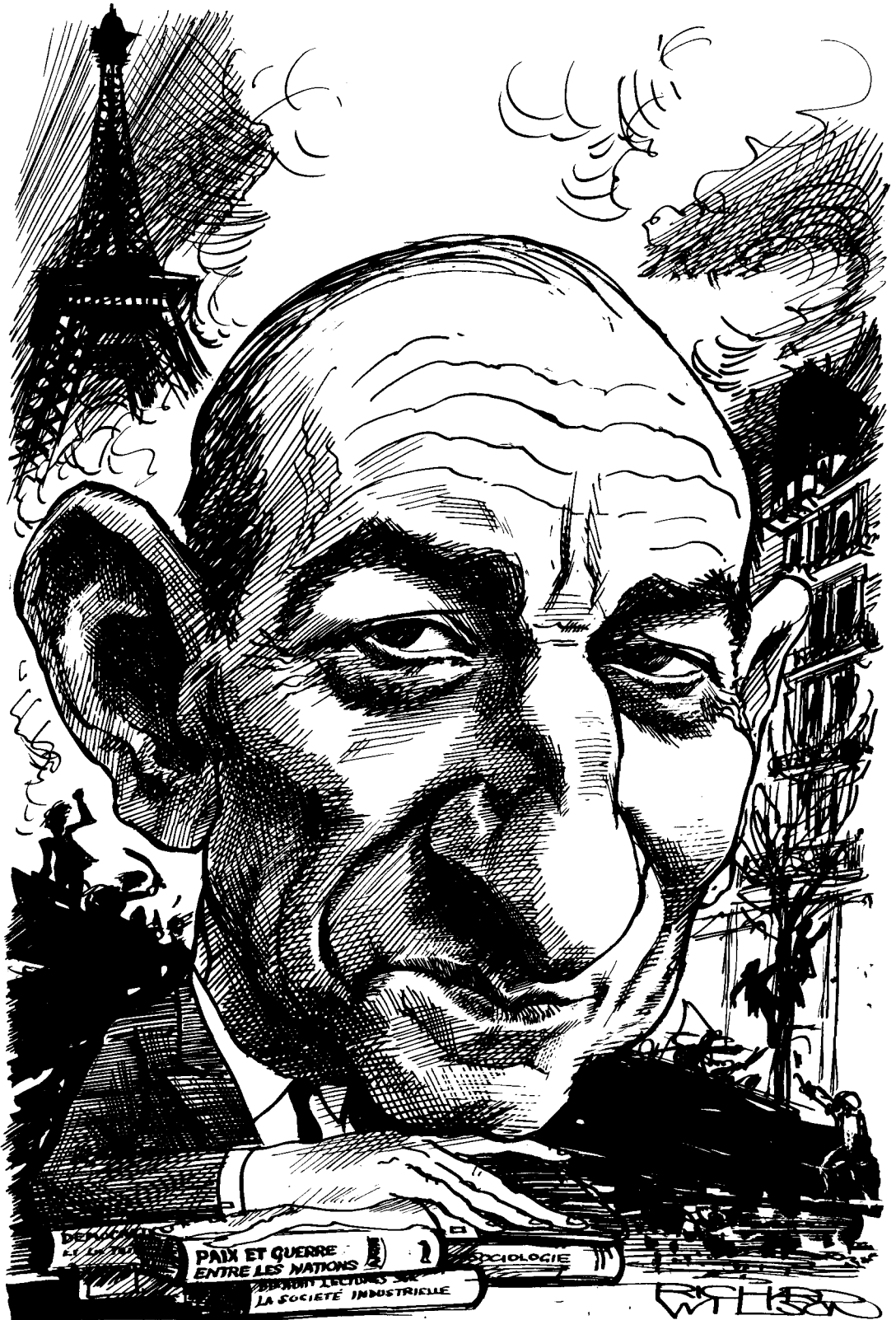
interference from those who do not share its pre-suppositions—this view of a civilisation developing peacefully in accordance with the implications of its own values—has been the one most usually adopted by politicians and political philosophers since his age. Now, however, we may well wonder whether Herder or even Ibn Khaldûn does not present a more realistic picture of historical change. The idea that there exist different civilisations, based upon different sets of values, suggests that shifts in world power must also be expressed by shifts in the hierarchy of civilisations and that, during such changes, values hitherto dominant will be eroded and finally replaced by other complexes of thought and feeling.

Over four centuries Western rationalism has created a political, social and economic system which has come to embrace the world and, in recent years, has been embodied in a network of institutions and relationships of great complexity and vulnerability. Now these have been put at risk by the intrusion upon them of other types of rationality, holding different values and directed to different ends—types of rationality which can be described (from the Western point of view) as "more primitive", but must also be admitted to be "more dynamic" as well. To the insipid utilitarian slogans which decorate the mazes of the international economic system are opposed the simplicities of religion and nationalism—both of them potentially destructive of it; to the introspective uncertainties of Western liberalism, the terrible assurance of those who are willing to kill and be killed; to the prudent responsibility of those concerned to keep an international system going, the romantic irresponsibility of those whose world system has not yet come into being.

Now, perhaps for the first time since Gibbon wrote, we are submitted to a "barbarian influence" upon our fate. It would be well if this evoked in us some sense of the fragility of our institutions and the transience of our civilisation. In a splendid and terrible phrase Joseph de Maistre wrote "*l'effusion du sang humain n'est jamais suspendue dans l'univers . . .*" Civilisations, political and economic systems, ethical and social values also know the cruelty of destruction, the violence and bitterness of death. For "the barbarian factor" is, no doubt, history itself, that kaleidoscope whose successive brilliances so dazzled Herder and perhaps awakened in the mind of Ibn Khaldûn a sombre satisfaction at the fulfilment of the decrees of God.

⁹ Japan, one suspects, may provide a rather more formidable political answer to the same question.

¹⁰ The European Community is sometimes described as evolving towards a "peaceful" or "non-military" state. This is, of course, a contradiction in terms. No state which lacks means to ensure its own survival can be called a state at all. If Europe is to unify, military power must be an essential ingredient of its unity.



The Achievement of Raymond Aron

Reflections "at 75"—By RALF DAHRENDORF

IT IS STRANGE and remarkable that Raymond Aron and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe have this in common: neither has really found the "division of labour" a problem, although each in his own way has effortlessly transcended the world of such divisions in his intellectual exploits. For what is the recent winner of the prestigious Goethe Prize: a sociologist? a philosopher? a man of politics? a journalist? an historian? a political economist? These categories don't apply; as an individual he has outgrown all categories.

It is remarkable since not only Marx, but also his disciples, attaches special importance to the dream of abolishing the division of labour. They have no faith in Adam Smith; and they are certainly right to some extent. A physics teacher in Cheltenham told me recently that he had succeeded single-handed in turning out the same number of pins (1,600 an hour?) as, according to Adam Smith, is only possible when the manufacturing process is split up and its various stages assigned to lots of different people. But, of course, this is not the principal objection of the Marxists. For understandable reasons, the young Marx disliked the division of labour whereby society reduces a man's life to a miserable fraction for a hundred hours a week. The reduction of working hours has brought about some improvement in this respect, as has progressive automation, which contrary to the suspicions of Ricardo, Marx and others has not created an army of unskilled workers, but has revived the necessity for informed supervision.

This is not, however, what is meant by "the abolition of the division of labour"; nor is it to be found in the "many-sidedness of the Renaissance man" or the "social mobility" of the American. The dream extends much further. Its methodological version is called "interdisciplinarity", that lukewarm dish-water of imprecise thinkers, of the intellectually immature, who attempt to shirk any discipline with words whose meaning cannot be ascertained either from the context of the sentence or from any other context. In practice this is equivalent to the life-style of Katmandu (or some other "in" place), the cherished longing for the

simple life, fishing in the morning, hunting at midday, critical criticism in the evening. Here, the chances of survival of a world with a rich potential of productive forces perish in a sloppy confusion of aimless and shapeless existences.

This is not only completely foreign to Goethe, but also to Aron. The idea that the division of labour is not evil in itself can easily be derived from a reading of *Wilhelm Meister* or of the *Lectures on Industrial Society*. The important thing is to come to terms with it. The Greek σοφός with the accusative case renders it in its most abstract form as a description of the man who is σοφός τὰ πάντα, who understands the things of this world. Ultimately, both would have had to admit that they were "realists", not in the sophisticated cognitive sense (in which they are rather downright nominalists), but in the sense that they take the world as given in its fundamental human structures and confine themselves to changing what can be changed.

That is, one might say, begging the question. What is it possible to change, and what is a fundamental structure? This question is most easily answered in pragmatic or operational terms: we have to put it to the test. But when it is put to the test, we must neither allow ourselves to be misled by the utopian spirit nor by the *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (however "critical" this purports to be); we must start from the basis of what is, and try to make the best of it. The realistic attitude is also an experimental attitude towards the world. "I personally belong to those", says Aron in the *Lectures*:

"... who side with probability. I believe neither in the necessity of unlimited technical progress nor in the necessity of terrible or inevitable catastrophes. I am an optimist, though with certain reservations. In my opinion, technical progress can unfold in one system as well as in another, but this progress is subject to at least two conditions: firstly to the relation between the increase in population and the development of resources, secondly to the relation between creative and destructive devices. It is impossible to

develop creative devices without at the same time also putting more devices of self-destruction into the hands of man. It is difficult to predict with absolute certainty what use men will make of the devices they are amassing."

RAYMOND ARON was born in Paris in 1905. He has led a very European life; and for someone who was born in 1905 that means a life full of interruptions, full of collisions with history, and also probably of many unfulfilled hopes despite the fullness of his private, academic, and public existence.

Jean-Paul Sartre is one of those important individuals in Aron's life to whom he was bound by a relationship that was at once both close and fraught. They were both pupils and contemporaries at the *École Normale Supérieure*. Later, in 1933–34, Aron deputised for Sartre as a teacher of philosophy at the *Lycée* of Le Havre, while Sartre filled Aron's post at the *Institut Français* in Berlin. After the War, together with André Malraux and Merleau-Ponty, they were both editors of one of the most important products of that great age of periodicals, *Les Temps Modernes*. But in those days Aron had already moved a long way from his socialist beginnings—they were in any case more the conventional orientation of the young intellectual of the day—whereas Sartre was increasingly succumbing to that delusion which Aron above all was combating in his writings, namely Marxism.

The other great Frenchman Aron clashed with, of whom he approved and yet with regard to whom he always maintained a certain degree of independence, was Charles de Gaulle. During the War, having emigrated to London, Aron, as editor of *La France Libre*, was naturally a part of the resistance around and with de Gaulle. In the winter of 1945–46 Aron, as head of Malraux's cabinet, even moved in the circles of a de Gaulle government. Later however, and above all during the period of transition from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic, Aron's numerous articles and public utterances clearly voiced his more Anglo-Saxon attitude towards democracy, his passionate defence of an empirical, rather than Cartesian rationality. The book *Immuable et Changeante* (1959) manages in its very title to demonstrate the value of stability in change by contrasting it with the worthlessness of intransigence and vacillation. Aron has always remained a critic in the best sense of the word.

ARON is a Frenchman, a Jew, a lover and friend of England, and also a friend of the United States (a difficult friendship this, in which admiration and

disappointment are intermingled); in addition governments and universities of these and other countries have honoured him many times; but his land of destiny is in a way Germany. There is at least as much to say about Aron and Max Weber, and Aron and Clausewitz, as there is about Aron and Jean-Paul Sartre or Aron and de Gaulle.

Aron went to Cologne University as a lecturer in 1930. From there he went to the Berlin *Institut Français*. One product of these three years in Germany was the still important study of *Present-day German Sociology*. The influence of Max Weber which first became evident in that work still takes on new angles and aspects in Aron's work today. One would, I suspect, not be wrong in thinking that it is also Max Weber the person which attracts Aron: his restrained political temperament which nevertheless constantly betrays in its analysis of society the great commitment of a liberal mind, the man who almost wilfully separates understanding and change, who nevertheless succeeds in unleashing the explosive power of his intellect within these limits. Comparisons between human beings are always difficult. Great men must possess a high degree of that basic human quality: individuality. Nevertheless, let me say this: Raymond Aron is the only social scientist of recent decades who, in view of his wide sphere of interest, his combination of analysis and action, commitment and power of understanding, his blend of critical revolt and critical reserve, may be compared in terms of significance with Max Weber.

FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW, Aron's life is a bibliography. He has published more than 30 books. He has voiced his opinions on current political events not only in his many articles in *Combat*, *Le Figaro* and (since the *Gleichschaltung* of *Le Figaro* by the press baron Hersant) *L'Express*, but also in those pamphlets so justly popular in France yet which are unfortunately almost unknown elsewhere in the West, those rapid-fire pieces of journalism in book form, of which the Algerian articles of 1957 and 1958 still echo in the mind, as does the analysis of the events of May 1968. The "philosophy of history" has occupied him since his doctoral thesis in 1938. In the field of general sociology, among many other writings, Aron has published those *Lectures* which I will return to again in a moment. These, however, largely belong together under the rubric of analysis of contemporary events, as do the famous book on *Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955) and several others. Aron's interest in the "theory of international relations" is long-standing; not many writers have managed as he has to deal more than once with the Comtean theme of war and industrial society. Aron himself is no longer quite satisfied

with his extensive work *War and Peace among Nations*. So there will be all the more to say about possibly his most important work, the two volumes of *Penser la Guerre*, Clausewitz which appeared in 1976.

One should not forget that Aron taught social science for many years, before the War in Toulouse, after the War in Paris, from 1955 as professor at the Sorbonne, then after 1970 at the *Collège de France*, and as a guest at numerous universities around the world; and when describing this man it is also important to add that he has stimulated, influenced and indeed left his stamp upon many intellectuals without ever allowing a sect to form around him. There are many admirers of Raymond Aron, but there are no "Aronists" and there never will be.

ASIDE FROM THE external dates of his life and publications I would like to attempt to discuss Raymond Aron's intellectual achievement by pursuing three themes: his non-Marxist concept of Industrial Society; the portrayal of Clausewitz, a surprising hero for a modern social scientist; and finally, the rather heroic pessimism of the topical publications from 1968 until his *Plaidoyer pour l'Europe décadente*.

Many names have been used to describe social development from 1945 to the beginning of the 1970s, but it has one main theme: "growth." Of course, growth, and above all economic growth, was not unknown before this time in those countries which today we call "highly-developed." There had already been one period of explosive growth in the decades before 1913, which was then of course followed by the ups-and-downs of the Wars and the inter-War period. In all the very old industrial countries—England, France, America—one can trace the virus of growth back into the 18th century, even, if one has a mind to (in Europe at least), a further two hundred years into the past. The "attitude of economic subjects", which occupies Aron as it does Max Weber, has three main aspects, each of which has its own history: "the economic-technical spirit", "the spirit of economic calculation" and "the spirit of progress: the tendency towards constant innovation."

After 1945, however, in many respects the phenomenon of growth took on a new dimension: it became (to use one of Aron's concepts) *planetary*. It reached previously unheard-of proportions; and it produced at least two very distinct forms, the capitalist and the socialist form (unless one also wants to consider the growth of under developed countries, or at least of a few of them, as a form in its own right). Industrial society came into being, more than that, the world as an industrial society.

This is not the place to reiterate Aron's penetrating description of industrial society. It has become

well known; its influence is unmistakable in school textbooks, official speeches, leading articles. Success? Undoubtedly. Trivialisation? To some extent that could not be helped. Refutation through mass popularity? That would be useless, fruitless *Kulturkritik*. The great period of growth explosion has found few commentators of Aron's stature. This is reflected in the methodical intelligence of his analysis, which manages to combine in an astonishing way fashionable and traditionally valid arguments as well as correct and dubious material. "The industrial society" is not above criticism; even if this stone is thrown by someone inside a glass house.) The following lines from the *Eighteen Lectures* contain the nucleus of such doubts:

"We are conscious of the fact that we cannot reach any definite, generally valid conclusions. I will attempt to summarise the problem with two quotations: the words are attributed to Frederick II of Prussia, every man should 'find salvation after his own fashion (*auf seine Fassung selig werden*).' That is as true of economic growth as it is of the prosperity of the individual. The other quotation comes from Voltaire: 'He who does not have the understanding of his age, has the whole misfortune of his age.' In every epoch the answer must be found to the problems which the current phase of growth presents. . . ."

With regard to method and also with regard to content, this is the epitome of what is nowadays called "pluralism." Without using the concept in this way, Aron subscribes to the same idea. His criticism of Marx is never a criticism of the insights into the economic determination of social processes which Marx articulated, but always criticism of their claim to be *exclusively true*. Monistic systems of explanation are foreign to him, because too much experienced reality falls through their mesh. After Karl Popper and the arguments about positivism, this is a familiar position. Pluralism cannot mean the equanimity of ideas in the sense that a critical theory and a phenomenological theory must be set alongside a positivistic theory, or that a "Marxist science" can grow up alongside "bourgeois science." "Marxist" or "bourgeois science" are about as fitting terms as "German physics", namely not at all; they belong in the dustbin of intellectual history. The refutation of monistic systems implies that science in its very essence namely as an attempt *rerum cognoscere causas*, is syncretistic. Of course, we attempt to simplify a complicated world with our concepts, to reduce it (if need be) to a concept: but this concept is always a bundle of elements, a highly complicated thought-molecule.

IF ONE CARES TO FOLLOW Aron thus far (or to suspect such an attitude in his work), one finds that

even his analysis has a vulnerable Achilles heel. The syncretism of the scientific method, meaning the combination of Marx and Tocqueville and Montesquieu and Weber focusing on a definite problem, can lead to two equally deplorable errors. The first is that the concept to which one has reduced things—say, the concept of “Industrial Society”—since it already contains so many varied elements, also contains within it, barely distinguishable from each other, the most diverse forms of real societies. Aron distinguishes carefully between levels of generalisation. He also continually emphasises that similar social structures do not in the least imply that friendly international relations must necessarily follow. His aversion to any form of totalitarianism is undisputed; sometimes however (even if it is with open reluctance), he comes close to the “convergence theory” which considers that different types of industrial society are running on related lines. Here one might pose quite different questions: for instance, how useful in reality is a concept which suggests the conclusion that the Soviet Union and the United States, or Japan and Great Britain are “converging” because of inner laws of determination? To put it more forcefully: is the industrial quality of a society perhaps just as much material which is shaped by its specific culture, as it is the shaping power of those cultures?

The other problem is closely related to this. It is fortunately not true that Aron truly believed that every community can find “salvation after its own fashion.” There are differences between societies, and Aron has helped us to understand them. In the evaluation of these differences a large measure of subtlety is required; Aron has never been taken in by the idea of a simple distinction between Market and Plan. In fact, one of the chief characteristics of his method of argument is careful consideration of pros and cons. To follow this is a pleasure, even if one sometimes asks oneself how Aron will emerge from the labyrinth of argument and counter-argument. But he does emerge and his readers emerge with him, not at a random place, but at a position which I would like to term, without making any political allusion, that of a Social Liberalism.

NOW FOR CLAUSEWITZ. What made Aron write his *chef d'oeuvre* about this German soldier? And how on earth are his old Prussian values related to those of a complex, social, and liberal industrial society? In one of Hermann Hesse's letters of 1932 we find the passage:

“Clausewitz and Scharnhorst do not confront you with conflicts, they show you a clearly defined duty, and as reward for the fulfilment of this duty, they show you tangible values: victorious battles, dead enemies, decorated generals, monuments in the future.”

Is this the world of Raymond Aron? Or should one rather ask: is this the world of Clausewitz and Scharnhorst?

“The Prussian patriots of 1813 [Aron observes] also preserve a sense of humanity, of human suffering. Nothing is more alien to Scharnhorst and Clausewitz than metaphysical wooliness. . . .”

Of course this last remark is a little ambiguous: Aron has to concede a little ground to Clausewitz's numerous critics. Whether his world was (to quote Hesse again) “clear, simple, masculine, heroic” is doubtful. After all he did say of the art of war that it demanded the mathematical genius of a Newton or an Euler; and Aron remarks that this apparently most German of Germans had very Cartesian characteristics. But that is not all; it is barely the beginning of the story of that man whose character Aron summarises in moving words:

“Inclined to melancholy, endowed with a lively sensibility and a disciplined intellect, driven into action by the Romantic notion of fame and the craft of war and yet at the same time offended by the unpleasant aspects of social life, even if they were extremely trivial, a poor man surrounded by the rich, a man of dubious nobility surrounded by aristocrats, after a career that was spectacular for a penniless lieutenant from Neuruppin (yet disappointing for the intimate associate of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau), destined by his intelligence for study and research, yet by his father and his own values for the battlefield, Clausewitz suffered from his own inner turmoil, although he did not succumb to the contradictions between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, between the ideals and cruel realities of politics, between the innovators and the reactionaries . . . he, or at least his body, succumbed in the end to cholera.”

Here then is one of the reasons for Aron's book about Clausewitz: unlike vociferous critics in many other countries, he was personally concerned with Clausewitz the man. The key factors which connect Clausewitz and Max Weber (who is often mentioned in the book) are plain to see—suffering incurred through action; the experience of the incompleteness of human thinking; the contradiction between intelligence and inherited values, ideal and reality, private conviction and responsibility, between the theorist and the general.

But there is a deeper reason for the book. It is crowded with biographical details, textual interpretations, arguments with historians and military theorists, historical portraits, in short, it is a great biography of a man, his work, his time and his significance for our time. And yet it is above all a theoretical book. Aron has always been fascinated by two authors and their masterpieces,

by Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Marx's *Das Kapital*. He finds both significant but decisively inadequate. *The Prince* overestimates the possibilities of individual action. *Das Kapital* overestimates the determining power of uncontrollable events. Clausewitz—the Clausewitz of the theoretical treatise *On War* (1833)—has found for Aron the beginnings of a synthesis, in what Aron calls the “peculiar trinity”: the interplay of *The People* or primal power; *The General* or free will and decision; and *The Government* or regulating reason.

Clausewitz's “peculiar trinity” is not the only reason for Aron's interest. After all the trinity also makes possible the famous formula of “*Krieg als der Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln* (War as the continuation of politics by other means).” War for Clausewitz is not a one-dimensional act of violence, but (as Aron, unlike others, argues with great penetration) it is bound up with political impulses. In the dialectic of means and ends, military victory is only a means to the end of peace, even if this is peace on the victor's terms. It follows from this that in the other dialectic of moral and material power Clausewitz is searching for a “way out” in the specific combination of both. It especially follows, however, that in the dialectic of defence and aggression there is a defensive method of strength.

The second volume of the work contains a two-fold history of the influence of Clausewitz's work. The first is the concrete influence on the generals of the First World War, Foch and Schlieffen, and on Lenin and on Mao Tse-tung. It is a history of misunderstandings:

“From Clausewitz's peculiar trinity—The People, The General, The Government—Maoist ideology prefers the first element, Western ideology the second, and Soviet ideology the third.”

Worse still, the formula of “the continuation of politics by other means” was constantly misunderstood in the 20th century as a justification of war . . . until Hiroshima.

THE SECOND PART of the history of the work's influence is a brilliant analysis of international relations in the nuclear age. With this, in the final pages, Aron answers the question very intensively and very personally, as to why his interest in the theme of war has remained so lively.

“Anyone who reflects on wars and strategies today [he observes] raises a barrier between his intelligence and his humanity.”

Aron does this, for he considers war even in the nuclear age as a piece of undeniable reality. So one must understand it, find theories which explain it. History is the laboratory of sociological theory.

Wars are certainly only a part of the process of international relations; here too the primacy of politics holds good. Moreover, they are connected with internal social developments through the element of “The People.” Aron finds at least the rudiments of all this in Clausewitz. He may not be a “neo-Clausewitzian” in a dubious sense of the term, but he is undoubtedly a Clausewitzian in his theory of international relations.

NOR IS THIS the last word. Aron does not like emotional language and only rarely gives vent to his personal feelings in his works. But at the end of the remarkable work on Clausewitz he weakens for once—to the profit of the reader. He first speaks of Germany and complains: why hasn't this *Reich der Mitte* confined itself to “preventing coalitions”, as taught by Thucydides and Clausewitz? Why has it sought its salvation in aggression? Then he speaks of the only hope for mankind in the nuclear age, which lies in the political control of armaments, and he urges governments to be sensible. And finally he calls to mind the book-burning organised by Goebbels, the first incidents of which he witnessed with his friend Golo Mann on the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin in 1933, and deduces from it the necessity but also the price of resistance:

“Other people live from other emotions. How could I, as a Frenchman of Jewish origin, ever forget that France owes its liberation to the power of its allies, and that Israel owes its existence to its weapons and any chances of survival to its own determination, and that of the Americans, to fight if it proves necessary . . .?”

RAYMOND ARON had been working on Clausewitz for over forty years when his book was published in 1976; this fact alone would justify my considering it here at such length. But the work is also the essence of Aron's faith in the role of reason in politics, a reason which is ultimately represented by governments legitimised by the people, which carefully adjust the means of their actions to the ends, amongst which peace and prosperity are the most immediate. Given this background it is perhaps understandable that the turbulent '60s and in particular *les événements* in Paris in May 1968, represented such a turning-point for Aron. Respect for the great man demands that we should not try to dodge this question.

Raymond Aron was above all angered by the events of 1968, deeply angered. Even in his book on Clausewitz there is an angry comment shortly before the end on the students of 1968 who imagined they could also conduct politics by “other means.” It is simply not permissible for every “highwayman, or gangster, or protester” to confuse

his misdemeanours with revolution and with civil war. In the pamphlet published as early as July 1968 on the “undiscoverable revolution” (*La Révolution Introuvable*), a mixture of essays, newspaper articles and a long interview, scorn is heaped upon the “psychodrama” of the endless student palaver, but also on the diverse predicaments of their parents, and of the Communists and of the Gaullists. Aron despises the thought of politics which operates with mindless slogans like “*Ten years are enough!*” or “*France is bored!*” And then two much more serious matters suddenly flash into view which may explain why the events of May 1968 so deeply affected Aron the scholar and political animal: one is the destruction of the university, and the other is the insight into the vulnerability of modern societies. Confronted by the barricades put up by the rebellious students, Aron says, the government had the choice:

“... either to lose face or to create martyrs. In a liberal country it is just as dangerous to lose face as it is to create martyrs. And the French government began in that night of Friday-to-Saturday to create martyrs, only then in the next night of Saturday-to-Sunday to lose face. . . .”

What else could they do? Modern and free societies are vulnerable because in the last resort they depend on legitimation through self-discipline. When this breaks down, all that remains is the choice between a police state and anarchy.

Many friends will follow Aron this far. However, sometimes it seems to me as if he had drawn two conclusions from this which are not so easy to go along with for a younger person. Personally the events of 1968 affected him—and certainly he was not alone—very much, perhaps too much. Since then a trace of melancholy, of sad resignation is perceptible in his works. (The comparison between two versions of the lecture on *War and Industrial Society*, written twenty years apart, makes this clear even for the analysis of international relations.) Essentially, however, a trace of defensiveness has crept into his publications. This is certainly a respectable attitude for the Clausewitzian. Nevertheless, the friendly critic wonders whether the *Plea for Decadent Europe* (1978) does not sacrifice many nuances of the earlier analyses to a stark portrayal, and especially one which does not extend the substance of his earlier works and thus the investigation of the antagonism between “East and West” in its social dimension.

I SAY THIS with considerable hesitancy. For to take up the immediate theme of the events of 1968: the old university no longer exists, and it will never return, whatever wise and not-so-wise university reforms stipulate and education ministers may imagine. This old university was certainly in need

of reform but essentially it represented a rare human possibility. The *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* made possible a lively relationship between teachers and students on the basis of a voluntary recognition of certain rules. It was, moreover, not only the obvious stage for great scholars, but also the longed-for goal of those who had worked their way up from straitened circumstances.

My own father would have loved to have gone to university; but he had to earn his living at an early age, so that at least one of the five brothers from this working-class family could go to secondary school and then on to university, *the University*, not the comprehensive university or the polytechnic. Aron described these things in his *Figaro* articles of May and June 1968 forcibly and at the same time with a touch of *tristesse*. For he doubtless sensed that all this was finished. The Sorbonne has now been replaced by Paris I, Paris II, Paris III, Paris IV (and so on), and the *universitas* by a sort of department store of tertiary education.

Great scholars avoid universities wherever possible, and the longings of working-class children are also presumably directed towards some other things. But—and this is the question that must be posed entirely without sentimentality—was this the result of 1968? Or was 1968 only a symptom of more far-reaching changes? And weren't these changes even desirable? Was the price of the old university perhaps even justified in view of the gain in educational opportunities? I am not sure of the answer: nor do I need to be for the moment, as long as I live in an academic world in which “1968” has hardly left any traces behind it.

The broader and deeper problems of modern society have little to do directly with 1968, although the questions they pose have all gained weight in the last ten years (and could all be easily formulated in Aron's words). Much has changed in the international picture in the course of this decade. Even if Dr Henry Kissinger's picture of a world of “multi-polarity” is more a neo-Bismarckian fiction than a reality, the confrontation of two Super-powers describes neither the thematics nor the structure of world politics today. Economic themes have become more important. Even without being termed a symptom the OPEC phenomenon is new. With protectionism a new kind of retreat from responsibility is on the increase, especially in the United States. Many of these developments have direct connections with changes in social structure. Problems of economic growth coincide with a certain weariness of growth. Everywhere, and especially in the large developing countries, people are asking themselves whether there are not other paths, other footsteps into the future, another concept of “welfare” than that measured in the league table of the gross national product. There are indications that the notions of

value, on which decades (and perhaps centuries) of modern economic society were based, are being called into doubt. "Options" are not enough; there must also be binding ideas, ligatures, if life-chances are to be extended. Such concerns may finally prove to be evanescent or superficial, in any case less important than the enduring fundamental structures of industrial society. But it could also indicate a problematical state of human affairs in which "*décadence*" is not sufficient to preserve our European welfare and prosperity, let alone to give the old continent an active role in the new search for rational answers. How gladly we would be listening to Raymond Aron on all these questions!

I DO NOT WANT TO CONCLUDE without saying a personal word about him. For nearly twenty years I have had the good fortune to meet him regularly. More than fifteen years ago he was the *spiritus rector* of the *European Journal of Sociology*, which we edit (along with others) and

which, thanks not least to the American intellectual interest in Europe, has maintained its readership. He is an honorary fellow of the London School of Economics, where he is an esteemed and always welcome guest. So I hope I will not embarrass him if I try to put my admiration for him into a few words. Aron belongs to those who do not have to prove the radical nature of their thinking through their outward appearance or life-style. He values the virtues of an age which did not treat the integrity of human beings so cavalierly as ours does. For him politeness, respect, and *amitié* (in the untranslatable French sense) are values which both bind people together and protect them in their individuality. Behind this there is a man who does not submit: not to others, however powerful they may be; nor to ideas, at least not to pretentious ideological systems. Aron is a master of irony, of humane irony, incisive in debate, yet tolerant and indeed gracious to other people. When he is in the room, I have rarely known him to speak straight away; but when he does, his great authority is immediately felt. He radiates intellectual vitality.

Executive

... problem must be grasped at the root
 unless your effective personality
 strong no matter how good you are
 technically how hard you work
 you are not going to really be
 a success in creative thinking action
 unless hopefully you can establish
 a strong acceptable self to sell

to sell things ideas and yourself
 develop leadership traits invest in
 false ideas with regard to in-put
 consolidate will-power resolution
 evaluate respect for earnings
 to cure inferiority complex
 integrate with corporate objectives
 project a new successful you

bilateral benefits bound to accrue
 strengthen your grip on affairs become
 success-orientated improve
 the results you get from others be able
 to render communication effective
 eliminate personal failure-types
 from your company thinking profit absorption
 result of successful appraisal factors

the problem must be. . .

Glen Cavaliero

Blake Morrison

Looking at Tower Blocks

1: Mythological

Ghost-towers, upended coffins
where we bury our living
(the poor, the old, those that don't matter)

what names they have given you
here in the Lewisham wastes:
Hercules and Pegasus and Orpheus,

the mythology of Milton Court Estate!
That you might come alive at night,
as Schopenhauer said all statues do,

and perform brave feats—
was that what they were thinking?
You were carrying their little hopes for them

like giants sent to combat,
or like Lot's family
escaping the darkness of the past.

Pillars of salt, faithless ones,
you are good for nothing now
but storing out half-lives and failures.

2: Incendiary

There are fires each sunset,
mysterious arsons
it's futile to extinguish
for they do no damage.

Windows are leaping
with huge salmon flame,
but the victims trapped in there
go on unconcerned.

It is the aesthete's favourite,
transient and smokeless
and lovely to look at,
destroying nothing.

3: Nautical

Huge, never-to-land *Narrenschiff*
becalmed in the estates,
what sad faces stare from your rigging!

There was fever, I'd heard,
in the worst of your cabins,
and occasional mad folk lost overboard.

But now I've seen for myself
these twenty-eight gangways
—and frankly nothing seems right.

How far you've drifted
from Saint-Elia's yard,
his blueprints for a future powered

by vast "dynamic" fleets.
Grey and unwanted, you float here
in the wake of that dream—

doomed to these wastes forever,
though each morning women come
to hang distress flags from your side.

4: Piscatory

Planes sidle past here
like fish across a lake,
delicate tailfins
and a long white wake.

Silvery traffic eddies
from the Barbican to Bank:
how nice to look out on
the richest waters in England.

Even crane-crews angle
for a share of the stash,
their lines urging up
a grey, enormous catch.

5: Missionary

From my high window I can see
the social workers start to ascend,
their cars abandoned in the valley.

Which rooms will be called on today?
Whose child has been found with cigarette burns?
Is this voice crying from the heights

that of the witch-woman
who chased them down last week,
a knife in her hand and hair flowing?

Roped together with care, they keep on coming,
these teams paid to struggle
with a mountain of misery and pain.

6: Alpine

In these mountain villages
you can't hire a Sherpa,
and yodelling and cowbells
have never been heard.

The view is stupendous,
the altitude dizzying,
but the pistes to the bottom
are awfully hard.

Once I was sent
on a special expedition there,
to learn from the hillfolk
some legend and myth.

They told of a creature
which haunted the summits,
fierce and abominable,
with a snow-pallid face.

7: Religious

It is your light I love most,
its heaping up at evening
like the candles in Sacré Coeur.

But more rigorous, I suppose,
the way that Mondrian might handle
a stained glass window.

"A machine for living in"
le Corbusier said,
but some of those who followed

wanted soul to be there too.
They were thinking of altars,
tablets raised against the dark,

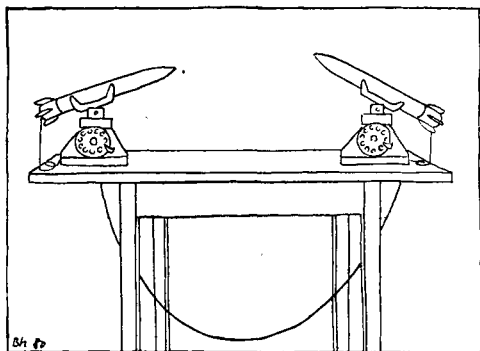
in whose brilliant oblongs
we could congregate and love.
And though it didn't come to pass

you have that look about you still,
a frail community of light
it hurts to disbelieve in.

NOTES & TOPICS

European Diary

How to Relax in the Cold War



Zurich

THE PHRASES, in all their sloganising fury, come from the East, but they have been finding their echo in the West—"a relapse into the Cold War!", "enemies of Détente and Peace!" President Carter and the Americans have been the main targets of the new Moscow ideological offensive since the US was unprepared simply to accept without protest the Soviet Army's military intervention across the Afghanistan frontier. But why should the Kremlin have been surprised at the Americans' surprise?—and surprised they appeared to be, as upset and even bewildered as Imre Nagy had been in Hungary and Alexander Dubcek in Prague. All had been tempted to believe in the peaceful and "defensive" role of the Red Army, illusions regularly confirmed by firm handshakes and close embraces and even, as once in May, by a Presidential kiss.

Historians record that moment of hilarity some 50 years ago which broke out in the conference hall of the old Comintern in Moscow—an English Communist had tried to register an objection to a Kremlin resolution, remarking "But we *can't* say that—it simply isn't *true!*..." It could be that Carter's consternation over the bitter disappointment of discovering that Chairman Brezhnev had not quite been telling him the truth also proved a source of merriment in Moscow. But in this case the bit of fibbing is having more formidable conse-

quences. As one Italian writer put it (in the *Giornale Nuovo*), "Carter has been forced to shut the Book of Psalms and open up the World Atlas...."

I WONDER WHETHER the rhetorical propaganda against that *ol' debbil* "Cold War" is as effective as it used to be. Whatever the clumsiness and even primitivism of the Bolsheviks on the home front, forever shaky from permanently planned economic failures, they do have a skilful way with words and special talents for exporting them to the ideological markets of the West. Even in the days of their military weakness their verbal cannonades were more powerful than the West's. In the 1950s thousands of important Europeans (Sartre among them) rushed to sign the "Stockholm Appeal", once the formula by which the struggle against the Bomb and for Peace was dramatised. It had its uses, although it has been long dropped, long since forgotten.

"Cold War" itself may well have been of Western origin, and the phrase has been attributed to Walter Lippmann (though some say he had it from Bernard Baruch on his park bench). At that time it was intended to contrast a cold from a hot war (recently ended), and only now is it the antonym of *détente*; it was a short form to denote a limited amount of Post-War tension among competing national powers. What it meant was that we had our differences, our conflicts and confrontations, but these would in time produce a certain number of conventions and understandings, as we agreed about signals (and how to give them) and united in removing certain "contained" areas of difficulty from direct or overt conflict—all in the hope that the cold war would not become hot. There was also a "cold war" of ideas, and it remains difficult for me to see why this intellectual clash was ever felt to be something negative or evil. Still, the phrase "cold warrior"—or, along that Central European line in Germany which separates East and West, "*der kalte Krieger*"—became an ugly epithet of the day, even with its ungrammatical twist. (For if a person who is engaged in the Cold War becomes a cold warrior, does he when he has his hot lunch become a hot luncher?) But the phrase wormed its way into the vocabulary of the day, and no amount of semantics will get it out.

YET IT SEEMS to be able to work both ways, though seldom in our own press and publications are there references to Comrades Suslov or Ponomarenko, after a particularly sharp and aggressive Politburo speech, as "cold warriors." All these warriors, in East and West, appear to have sinister designs on the peace of the world. It is hard to formulate it exactly, but one can see what is

meant when it is said that they want to "hot up" the Cold War, although perhaps "refrigerating" it (or "deeper-freezing" it) might come closer to an accurate reading of the temperature of world politics.

But, to be sure, there are temperate or well-tempered souls amongst us, a few far-sighted politicians, a handful of wise statesmen—men (as Giscard d'Estaing reminded us the other day, and one wonders whom he had in mind) "on whose calm and insight world peace depends"—militants against militarism joined with progressives against a relapse, all relaxed chaps who know how to gird their loins to defend the hard-won relaxation.

Is the semantic confusion beginning to become troublesome? Some think of it as a kind of capitulation in the terminological war. For, after all, "Cold War" and "*Détente*" are not simple opposites like cold and hot-war. They represent the way in which we see the two great continuing periods of the post-War era; and as Dr Kissinger has just reminded us in Davos, the former was not all bad, the latter not all good. Both periods had much in common, not least the paradoxes of diplomacy and deployment. The most warm-hearted (if that is the word for such cardiac-cold characters) Soviet-American summit took place in Moscow in 1972, shortly after President Richard Nixon had presented Chairman Brezhnev with the news of the mining of the North Vietnamese harbours. The most dramatic episode of Washington-Moscow relations took place in 1948-49—the confrontation over the Berlin Blockade was icy, the welcome relaxation after the victory of the Air Lift enabled West Berlin to go about its normal business peacefully. As the Germans knew, *Spannung* and *Entspannung* lie very close together; and history is full of such twists and turns of cooperation and confrontation. The "cold war" did not exclude agreements, settlements, understandings; the much over-sold era of *Détente* included wars, military interventions, revolutionary coups, and armament build-ups. In any event, while the West went about its affairs "relaxed"—young John F. Kennedy's book popularised the phrase *While We Slept*—the USSR proceeded to "catch up and overtake" in many spheres of the East-West arms race.

I don't suppose I can persuade anybody to give up that messy bit of military meteorology, "Cold War", nor its useless companion term, full of foreign vagueness (and an eccentric accent which most proof-readers overlook), "*Détente*." But we might do well to remember how George Orwell in his studies of the language of politics (and especially in the *Newspeak* of "1984") demonstrated the deviousness of linguistic penetration, the compulsive mechanism by which victims are forced to adapt a useful terminology, and how words and phrases function as the instruments of strength and subjection. For my own part I will try to hold to a

definition which I once read: *détente* is the continuation of the Cold War by other means, and sometimes by the same.

François Bondy

Kreisky, Arafat & Friends

Young in Spirit

London



READERS of EN-COUNTER may be interested to reflect on the unexpectedly swift and dramatic confirmation of many of the points made in my article "The Strange Case of Bruno Kreisky" (May 1979).

Kreisky's almost royal reception of Yasir Arafat, the PLO leader, in Vienna last August graphically revealed the ideological symbiosis on the *Judenfrage* between a moribund Austro-Marxism and Palestinian Arab extremism. This curious alliance found its physical embodiment in Kreisky's fraternal embrace of Arafat and an official airport welcome more commonly associated with visiting Heads of State than with leaders of terrorist organisations. No doubt about it—the talks in Vienna between Kreisky, Willy Brandt (currently President of the Socialist International and Chairman of the German Social Democratic Party), and Arafat marked a qualitative turning-point in European attitudes to Israel and the Palestinian problem.

This time Arafat did not need to bring his revolver for the Press Conference in the Ballhausplatz. In the presence of two such distinguished representatives of the Socialist International the accent was clearly laid on his diplomatic credentials rather than any rousing revolutionary rhetoric about liberation through armed struggle. The flags of a resurgent Islam, of the Ayatollah Khomeini, of Third World liberation—the dreams of blowing up the entire Middle East and building a Palestinian State with "guns and blood"—all were quietly put aside for the occasion. Arafat's pilgrimage to Vienna was designed to show the world that in Kreisky's words,

"the PLO does not believe in the destruction of Israel." Any connection between the Palestinian right to national self-determination and the "elimination of Israel" (as it is clearly laid out in the Palestinian National Covenant) had disappeared down the memory-hole.

In return for vague verbal promises that the PLO would in future confine its terrorist activities to the Middle East (!) and pious declarations about European interest in peace and *détente* in the region, the PLO received a new laurel of legitimacy. To be sure, for Arafat and his supporters, PLO "terror" simply does not exist, or if it does, then (as he told the Viennese *Arbeiterzeitung* on 9 July) "Washington and De Gaulle were also terrorists." The fact that such brutal acts as the massacres at Lod Airport, at the Munich Olympics, Maalot, Kiryat Shemoneh, on the Tel Aviv highway or more recently at Nahariyah can be equated with the American struggle for independence or French resistance to the Nazis is perhaps a sign of our absurd times. One can scarcely blame Arafat for such parallels when even President Carter, in an unguarded moment, finds there is a worthwhile analogy to be drawn between violent Palestinian nationalism and the pacifist non-armed American civil rights movement. Nor can one be surprised at Arafat's willingness to tone down long-term Palestinian objectives for the sake of Dr Kreisky's whitewashing operation. The Austrian initiative, whatever its underlying motivations, serves to lend an air of cultured respectability to a blood-stained struggle and to render Arafat *salonfähig* in Western Europe. That this spectacle should have been orchestrated under the cover of the Socialist International is a sad reflection of that organisation's demise in the wake of Arab petrodollar diplomacy.

THE FACT IS that the PLO has never been (and never claimed to be) a socialist body. Nor are its democratic credentials at all impressive. In contrast to the PLO, the Israeli Labour Party is a long-standing member of the Socialist International and in July 1978, its leader (Shimon Peres) was closely consulted by Kreisky and Brandt in the formulation of the so-called Vienna document on the Middle East. On this occasion, however, Peres was left out in the cold; he was not even informed of the carefully prepared meeting with Arafat in Vienna. A strange method of encouraging dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians!

What weight, one wonders, are the Israelis expected to give to private assurances made by Arafat to "my friend" Dr Kreisky, that the PLO will readily accept any territory vacated by Israel? Such willingness in no way entails any modification of the long-term PLO strategy as embodied in the Palestinian National Covenant; i.e., to dismantle

Israel in stages. How can the Israelis be expected to talk to an organisation which does not even recognise *any* legitimate connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, let alone the relevant UN resolutions concerning the establishment of the Jewish State? Arafat's opposition to Resolution 242 and to the Camp David accords is not an accidental phenomena which can be got around by diplomatic niceties and verbal gyrations—it is rooted in the totalistic principles of current Palestinian nationalism and six decades of bitter conflict over the destiny of the Holy Land.

None of this means that the Palestinians should not be drawn into the peace process—on the contrary. Their presence is indispensable if the cycle of violence and terror is ever to be ended. But all the evidence so far has shown that the PLO in its present shape and form is a complicating factor in any agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Thus one-sided efforts to legitimise its status for the moment can only hinder the delicate structure of negotiations worked out at Camp David.

THE POLITICAL STORM in Israel provoked by the Vienna meetings went far beyond the personal idiosyncrasies of Dr Kreisky or the shock caused by Willy Brandt's participation in this enterprise. The encounters took on a peculiarly symbolic significance at a time when various signs point to the possible demise of Israel's "special relationship" with West Germany and the United States. Many observers in Israel have been alarmed by what they take to be a new pro-Arab bias in Bonn's *Nahostpolitik*. Such fears may be premature, but the fact remains that, of late, Chancellor Schmidt's government has been increasingly critical of Israel's policies in the West Bank and conspicuously responsive to the flurry of Arab princes passing through Bonn. Before Brandt's trip to Vienna (which presumably had Schmidt's tacit approval) the West German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, had visited hard-line confrontation states like Libya and Iraq to talk about oil. Meanwhile Saudi Arabia increased its deliveries to West Germany by 30% in the last six months. Growing criticism of Mr Begin (some of it quite justified) seemed to coincide all too obviously with growing German dependence on OPEC oil supplies. The pro-Arab line of the EEC, responding as much to German as French desires, has reflected this policy shift, while seemingly appeasing PLO demands for an independent Palestinian state. (Nevertheless, though German-Israeli relations may have reached a low point, Bonn still does not recognise the PLO.)

American-Israeli relations, though less burdened with the traumas of the past, have in recent months been, if anything, even more prickly. Last year's storm surrounding Andrew Young's resignation as

American ambassador to the UN highlighted the American interest in the backstage manoeuvres leading to the Vienna meetings. According to some accounts, it now emerges that the US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, tacitly approved Kreisky's initiative of which he was informed through the American ambassador in Vienna, then Mr Milton Wolf. It appears that Mr Vance even discussed the matter personally with Dr Kreisky in Vienna. Moreover, prior to Arafat's pilgrimage, Mr Wolf had three lengthy, detailed meetings with Issa Sartawi, a senior PLO official in Vienna. The State Department now calls these meetings "unauthorised" (Andrew Young's equally "unauthorised" encounters in New York appeared almost trifling by comparison), but their purpose seems obvious enough. For the sake of a dialogue with the PLO (ruled out on an official level by solemn written and oral assurances previously given to Israel) the US administration was exploring the possibility of amending Resolution 242. Washington was evidently hoping to appease the Arab oil-producers (the Saudis had raised their oil production in early June on a three-month basis to ease the American oil shortage), thereby holding down energy costs as well as breaking the deadlock over Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank. The Arab diplomatic offensive, masterminded by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, had threatened a cut-back in oil production if there was no "progress" on the Palestinian question. The Kuwaitis were proposing a new Security Council resolution which would link Israel's right to exist with international recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination (and of the PLO) as well as Arab sovereignty over East Jerusalem. For the United States to strike such a bargain, secret contacts with the PLO were judged indispensable, and moves to establish its diplomatic credibility were obviously welcome. If these were initially established through "European third parties", so much the better. US public opinion could be gradually prepared while the Carter administration strenuously denied that there was any shift in American policy towards Israel.

It all ended in a UN gaffe: the US Ambassador voted one way, Washington said its instructions the other way were misunderstood; the Israelis were astonished, the Arabs crestfallen. Messrs Vance and McHenry offered their excuses, but demonstrated only that if Andy was gone, they still remained young in spirit.

MEANWHILE, DOWN ON THE DANUBE, the Austrian Chancellor continues to run true to form. As I have emphasised before, Kreisky's obsessive "Jewish

complex" drives him to make a Jerusalem connection with practically every conceivable question (except possibly the future of the Vienna Opera and the Salzburg Festival). In a recent interview¹ he was asked about the Afghanistan invasion in the context of the crises over Berlin, Prague and Havana. His troubled mind darted immediately to Begin's Israel.

KREISKY: I must say something now that, possibly, will again cause me a lot of hostility . . .

—*which you're not afraid of.* . . .

KREISKY: One can't say, on the one hand, that the Soviet troops have to get out of Afghanistan and, on the other hand, not say that the Israelis should get out of the West Bank. Both Russians and Israelis motivate their policies on the grounds of the same "security needs." . . .

Kreisky has never been very good at making political distinctions, and in one minute's conversation the profoundly different world-political roles of the USA, the USSR, and Israel are in an "amalgam" called security-minded imperialism. Nor is he any more discriminating when he moves from concepts to persons. He "likes people" and will fly off happily from Vienna to see Chairman Hua or General Zia or Fidel Castro; but mention Menachem Begin, possibly the only elected constitutional leader of a liberal-democratic state between Kreisky's beloved Café Sacher and the Great Wall of China, and a kind of ghetto gate slams shut.

KREISKY: I talk to anybody. But I believe that there is nothing to talk about with Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin. After all there must be some results. I don't talk for my own pleasure. . . . Begin simply doesn't understand. Why then should I talk with him?

But what about the sterling leader of the Liberation forces (and associated guerrillas and terrorists)?

—*But with Palestinian leader Arafat?*

KREISKY: Yes, and he likes to talk with me. . . .

One other remark is worth quoting, for it reveals in another context the peculiar twist in Kreisky's looping way of thought. He is voicing approval of the Rumanian proposal, floated by Ceausescu, for a "weapon-free zone" in Central Europe.

KREISKY: It would almost be too beautiful to be true. Imagine, hundreds of miles on either zone of the line all free of weapons. . . .

One might have thought that Kreisky, proud of the prosperity and independence which Austria's armed neutrality has brought it since the withdrawal of the Soviet controllers in 1955, might have preferred the free present to the unfree past. But no. In a remarkable outburst of his usual misplaced sentimentality, Kreisky recalls:

¹ Interview in *Stern* Magazine (Hamburg), 26 February–6 March 1980, pp. 78–82.

"Once we had a system in post-War Vienna of 'Four-in-a-Jeep' with four military policemen controlling things and each other.... That worked marvellously, there was peace and quiet in the city...."

Also in the city (and in the Eastern third of occupied Austria) was the Red Army.

One can only hope that America and Western Europe (Giscard's France has, of course, already gone its own opportunistic way) will rethink their readiness to legitimise the PLO in return for a barrel of oil. Israel, too, will have to do some hard thinking, for token solutions to the Palestinian problem will only increase its diplomatic isolation and damage its long-term interests. If power comes out of the barrel of oil, then the force which brought Arafat to the steps of the Austrian Chancellery (and has now won him his first official Western diplomatic recognition) may take him (with or without the gun at his hip) to the garden of the White House.

Robert Wistrich

The Higher Illiteracy

London



"MOST OF THE students who take degrees are illiterate", says Bruno Zevi. He has resigned as professor of architecture after thirty years at Rome University in protest against hopelessly low standards and the impossibility of raising

them. I suppose he can't mean it literally; they must be able to sign their names. But one doesn't have to meet many Italian university students to see something of what he means. Their incredulity when you describe, say, the Oxbridge tuition system—the almost one-to-one relationship between tutor and undergraduate—says a lot. In a system of what Zevi calls "*università di massa*", based on completing a woefully inadequate secondary schooling, it is hardly surprising. When Kingsley Amis spoke of "more meaning worse" he wasn't envisaging a free-for-all entrance to anyone of secondary-school level who asked for it. More, at that flood-level, means not just worse but impossible for everyone, teachers and taught.

The overcrowding, the lack of facilities, the lack of contact between lecturers and students: even without politics coming into it (and you can't talk of anything Italian without politics coming into it), the horrors are formidable. Add to this fanatical politics, with their lunacy and anti-intellectualism, their slogans and non-thinking, their Orwellian non-

language... the weakness of the authorities, political or academic, in dealing with their enemies as much as with their supporters... the built-in impossibility of changing anything at all from within because extraordinary rules govern appointments, backing the mediocre against the excellent... and Zevi's despairing farewell as he retires 14 years early seems all too justified.

He maintains that things have gone beyond repair, "everything has disintegrated, the situation is serious, dramatic..." The luckiest survive, rather than live; but entirely without hope of "creating a culture" in the university. The university itself has become "a pachyderm", closed, bureaucratic, unwieldy, rule-ridden; faculty meetings are "interminable, mortifying ceremonies where pointless or irrelevant matters are argued and quarrelled over and voted upon."

"From 1948 onwards we fought to give meaning and culture to the university, to make it modern and progressive.... This process of regeneration was cut off by the uprisings of 1968. Earlier, we had been furiously attacked by the fascist side; now it was our own children, our best pupils, who brought in the rot, maintaining that culture was a bourgeois weapon, that a good lesson was a wicked assault upon the pupils, that the most intelligent and politically advanced teachers were to be particular targets for attack because their presence at the university set a seal of approval on an institution that had to be destroyed."

As for "liberalisation of entry", it gave the universities their *coup de grâce*. The situation was now

"insupportable and absurd: an impossible number of students, exams and degrees.... We lost control of the cultural level of the school [of architecture] and exams became violent. When a strict teacher failed him, a student would be passed by another who 'understood the young.'"

Commenting on the "Zevi affair", a leading article in a Milan newspaper starts by comparing the American and British university systems. In America, very high levels of research and achievement at some places, and at others large numbers of fairly low-grade students: "a system for a very rich country which can afford the most advanced research in the world and at the same time allow youngsters who will spend the rest of their life driving taxis to have twenty years of study...." In Britain, high achievement, and proportionately much fewer students, more carefully picked. That, the leader said, was the model Italy ought to have chosen. Instead, after 1968, "the universities were turned into theatres of violence and recently into centres of terrorism.... It hurts me to say that Aldo Moro was the first to open them to these attacks... and a year ago he had to pay for this indulgence with his life." Italy

has followed, “incredibly”, the American pattern rather than the British, but has taken only the American weakness, none of its strength.

“The doors have been flung open to a flood of people without work or prospects, and the value of a serious university training for the world of work has been reduced as much as possible. But it has not been possible to guarantee the existence of higher centres of research and teaching, or to create new ones when those were overwhelmed. So, while the American system includes both the best and the worst universities in the world, we have had to content ourselves with the worst.” (*Il Giornale*, 18 August 1979).

To comment on such desperate outbursts seems almost in bad taste, a smug impertinence; poking one’s nose into other people’s internal problems is like interfering in a family dispute. Still, from outside, and tentatively, perhaps I may suggest, not solutions (who would be so rash?), but a couple of points. The first is a matter of intellectual standards, of the basic levels of achievement, education, culture, or whatever you like to call it. If these sink very far below those of universities in other countries, of universities in the traditional sense of the word, must they not be considered different institutions altogether? Must “higher education” not be called by another name? At least it can’t be pretended that degree levels are internationally interchangeable.

The second is a more general matter, that of trust in the integrity of the judges and the system. If no one in public life (or by extension the universities, any seats of power and command) is to be trusted—or if, conversely, no one trusts the authorities, whether or not they are trustworthy—then how are even the honest to behave? In a system where theses are openly bought and sold for examinations, where nothing is expected without “pull”, the right word in the right ear, the nobbling of judges and arbiters at all levels, then how, why, the maddeningly honest may ask himself, stick to the rules if no one else does, and when no one is even going to believe that you have, if you do? This to my mind is the more important point. It isn’t so much the intellectual poverty as the moral chaos, the lack of trust, the ingrained cynicism, that makes improvement seemingly impossible.

The “system” is to be found everywhere—in the literary world, the yearly hand-out of prizes has become a scandal of high-level nobbling—and from top to bottom breeds a cynicism that cannot fail to breed further cynicism. Untrusted or untrustworthy judges produce untrustworthy candidates for judgment; and so on and so on, a galloping inflation of mistrust.

Two stories will illustrate my two points. I have had them directly from Italians I know well, within the past year. To illustrate the first point about

standards: a lecturer in physics at the prestigious *Scuola normale* in Pisa (the top institution for maths) telephoned his English sister-in-law not long ago to ask what “O-level” was (a fairly elementary examination usually passed by 15–16 year olds). He had been sent some physics papers, and as far as he could see, the level was that of second-year university students. . . .

The second, to illustrate my second point: two Italian girls I know applied for places at English universities last year and went to their headmasters for a reference. Two schools, two headmasters, two lots of parents who knew what had happened. Both headmasters told them to write their own reference. “And then”, they said, “I’ll sign it.”

PROFESSOR ZEVI’S RESIGNATION and the apocalyptic gloominess of his remarks on resigning have provoked much soul-searching and head-scratching, Italian-style—which includes (of course) snide comments on the integrity of individuals as well as broader considerations of the whole business. That something is wrong somewhere is generally agreed; but exactly where, why and through whose fault is harder to diagnose. Still harder to find is any credible remedy.

Most seem to agree that “the trouble lies deep”, and that the *università di massa*, that slogan-monger’s dream, prepares its students for nothing but a future of unwillingness to soil their hands. Professional jobs, productive white-collar jobs, are so few compared with the vast half-trained masses that, as one critic puts it, you have innumerable barristers who will never see the inside of a courtroom, engineers who will work as bank clerks, accountants who will never draw up a balance sheet: unproductive and (if productiveness means sliding back into the working class most of them climbed out of) determined to stay so.

“Free-for-all entry” is even freer than it might at first seem; just as, at the highest academic levels, standards are becoming yearly more laughable (no written thesis, it seems, is required even at what we should call Ph.D. level). “Anyone who has finished secondary school can get into any faculty”, says one academic. “It’s absurd! A first-rate accountant may come close to nervous collapse over Socrates, and an electrical engineer may find himself in trouble over a textbook of anatomy. It’s hardly surprising that the average isn’t exactly high. . . .” Still, he finds a hopeful sign in the increasing selectiveness of, for instance, Milan University. To the outsider, this selectiveness seems exercised, rather curiously, at the wrong end of the course. This year, out of 62,000 students, only 3,700 graduated. Why on earth, one wonders, were the other 58,300 admitted in the first place?

Isabel Quigly

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History & Archaeology

The Prospects of the Age

Optimists & Others—By ASA BRIGGS

FOR THE FIRST TIME since the Edwardian years some of the key themes in Victorian Liberalism have acquired a sense of topicality. Mrs Thatcher and her ministers grapple with familiar Liberal issues like the relationship between the market and the state, the relative influence of voluntary initiative and effort and of statutory obligation, and, not least, the reconciliation in political activity of short-term tactics and long-term objectives.

In such circumstances, a bundle of recent history books which if they had appeared a few years ago might have been regarded, as most books on the Victorians then were, as means of escape from the pressures of the present, may now be regarded as significant methods of illumination. There is a danger, of course, in treating history books, certainly in judging them, in this limited way. Yet because most, though not all, of recent political debate within the Conservative party and between the parties has taken economics, A-level or above, as its framework of reference, it is useful to turn to the historical framework, bearing in mind, of course, that during the early Victorian years Britain's industrial economy was in the lead and that now it is—and for long has been—in manifest decline.

It is this last and most obvious contrast between past and present, though it is not explored at any length, which provides Ian Bradley with the title of his study of Victorian Liberalism, *The Optimists*.¹ Although he includes chapters on "Non-Intervention and Self-Determination" and "The Voluntary Principle", and recognises that as attitudes towards the state are changing now we need to review 19th-century experience, he rather disappointingly—and misleadingly—concentrates on "optimism" as the unifying theme linking 19th-century Liberals (liberals with a capital L) together. In his highly readable but somewhat superficial

book, packed with fascinating quotations, but covering ground well trodden by earlier historians, he dwells above all else on the Liberal faith in "the goodness and rationality of man and the reality of progress." He argues that while the Liberal Party, as Sir William Harcourt described it, was "a house of many mansions, like the Kingdom of Heaven", Liberals shared "a fundamental optimism about life in its larger aspects." Lord Salisbury confessed his admiration for (or was it envy of?) Gladstone's "gorgeous, reckless optimism", and Mr Bradley believes that although world depression, two wars and the vicissitudes of the welfare state have ensured that "optimism is not a very dominant motif in the outlook of our own age", "the Victorian Liberals still have much to offer us today, not least in their refreshing and inspiring optimism."

I AM NOT SURE, however, that "optimism" is the key to the story he tells and the analysis which he presents. The Christian *credo* of the leading figure in the story, Gladstone, did not include any article concerning the perfectibility of man. Gladstone's *Diaries* continue to make this plain.² They are being superbly edited by H. C. G. Matthew in an impressive display of modern historical scholarship, and they reveal both in a number of long and often eloquent set pieces and in a mass of bare detail just how complex a character Gladstone was, how varied were the influences brought to bear upon him, and how powerful was the tug inside him between inclination and duty. Can we label as "optimistic", to take one example out of many, the birthday entry for 1856?

"While I am not conscious of any measurable progress in the warfare with particular sins, I am becoming alive to a new evil and danger in this that the ties which bind me to this world are growing more numerous and stronger."

This was the private view of a barely middle-aged Gladstone, who throughout the 1850s felt a sense of "rebellion against growing old": "there is a resistance to the passage of Time as if I could lay

¹ *The Optimists: Themes and Personalities in Victorian Liberalism*. By IAN BRADLEY. Faber, £12.50.

² *The Gladstone Diaries: Volumes Five (1855-1860) and Six (1861-1868)*. Edited by H. C. G. MATTHEW. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £40.



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hands on it and stop it." Yet the aged Gladstone, the "Grand Old Man", also had too many doubts about himself and the world to be described easily as an optimistic believer in progress. Oxford dons were not alone in remarking how much he looked back to the past rather than gazed forwards into the future; and the same pattern was revealed in his fascinating conversations with Lionel Tollemache at Biarritz during the 1890s. Thus, on one occasion in 1896, Gladstone replied to Tollemache's question, "Are you not inclined to take a thoroughly sanguine view of the prospects of this very reforming age?" with the reply, "Not altogether. The future is to me a blank. I cannot at all guess what is coming." He feared that "the love of money" would corrupt as much as socialism, warned against "the danger from the growth of that dreadful military spirit", and recalled how the "moral standard" of "public men" had deteriorated in England during his lifetime rather than improved. He insisted more generally that while he considered "the existence of evil inexplicable", he did not doubt the fact of it.

"The real problem was that of the origin and existence of evil, not its extinction; and this problem was wholly insoluble by man."

IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE to believe that Gladstone was unique among 19th-century liberals in looking at the future with some misgiving. There was a gloomy streak in John Bright, too. Thus, at the Manchester Banquet of 1878 held to celebrate the opening of Waterhouse's imposing new Town Hall, Bright chose to speak not of the triumphs of free trade or the political victories associated with the extension of the suffrage, but of the vulnerable dependence of the country on coal, iron and, not least, cotton. "Perhaps it is necessary to contemplate a distant period when our Town Hall will be a vast heap of ivy-mantled ruins." Keith Robbins in his tidy biography of Bright³ refers briefly to the address without quoting this passage, but suggests on the basis of no evidence that this and other addresses "represented rhetoric to order rather than the expression of deep feeling." He rightly notes, however, that by then Bright was deeply and beyond all doubt genuinely pessimistic about the future of India, a subject which had long interested him: England might well "receive her greatest humiliation [there] the way she has boasted of her greatest triumph."

There are more references in Ian Bradley's book to John Bright than to any other persons except Gladstone himself and John Stuart Mill—with Bright's friend Richard Cobden, and Gladstone's biographer, John Morley, coming next—and it would certainly not be difficult to assemble an

anthology of gloomy passages from either Cobden or Morley. Cobden was particularly sensitive to the failure of his middle-class contemporaries to destroy aristocratic power during the 1850s. He believed, indeed, that they were prostrating themselves at the feet of feudalism, and was equally surprised at working-class acquiescence. "Have they no Spartacus among them to head a revolt of the slave class against their political tormentors?"

As for Morley, *On Compromise*, published in 1874, contains many passages different in tone from those quoted by Bradley. The age, Morley wrote—and the 1870s are more significant than Bradley, with his eyes on the 1880s, suggests—was

an epoch of transition in the very foundations of belief and conduct. The old hopes have grown pale, the old fears dim; strong sanctions are become weak, and once vivid faiths very dumb.

There were missiles in the air, and Liberals could not escape them. Morley lived long enough, fruitlessly, to oppose and unhappily to experience the First World War; and Bradley himself quotes Harold Laski's remark about him in 1920 that he was by then "free from the cant of progress" and a passage from Morley's *Notes on Politics and History* (1923) in which he repeated that it might be an "optimistic superstition" to believe that "civilized communities are universally bound somehow or other to be progressive."

IT WOULD BE AS ABSURD to exaggerate "pessimistic" elements in 19th-century Liberal thought and feeling as to focus attention on optimism as a binding force. Yet Bradley is plainly wrong when he writes of the 19th century as a whole that "only a few lone voices sounded a discordant note" in a "general chorus of complacency and optimism." When Walter Houghton wrote *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (1957), he had to include adjacent chapters on "optimism" and "anxiety." It was Charles Kingsley—not one of Bradley's Liberals with a capital L, but the man who provoked the anti-liberal Newman's *Apologia*—who was the crudest optimist. Consider Lancelot Smith's letter to his Roman Catholic cousin in Kingsley's *Yeast*.

"Give me the political economist, the sanitary reformer, the engineer; and take your saints and virgins, relics and miracles. The spinning jenny and the railroad, Cunard's liners and the electric telegraph are, to me, if not to you, signs that we are on some points at least, in harmony with the Universe."

Houghton quotes a later prophecy of human perfectibility—that of Winwood Reade in his *Martyrdom of Man* (1892):

The God of Light, the Spirit of Knowledge, the

³ John Bright. By KEITH ROBBINS. Routledge, £8.95.

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Divine Intellect, is gradually spreading over the planet and upward to the skies. . . . Satan will be overcome; Virtue will descend from heaven, surmounted by her angels and reign over the hearts of men. Earth, which is now a purgatory, will be made a paradise.

This is as far removed from Gladstone as it is from Disraeli.

FOR A REAL OPTIMIST, we have to turn to a pre-Victorian writer, not surprisingly unmentioned by Bradley—William Godwin, born in 1756 and living on until 1836, one year before Queen Victoria came to the throne. After what Hazlitt called a “sultry and unwholesome popularity”, he passed into poverty and obscurity before spending his last few years ironically as a government pensioner—and a pensioner supported by Sir Robert Peel at that. As Godwin’s biographer, Don Locke,⁴ puts it succinctly,

The destroyer of pensions had survived the [Whig] destruction of pensions: the Jacobin, threatened by the Whigs, was saved by the Tories.

Godwin is well enough known today, though seldom read—first, for his book *Political Justice*, the first edition of which appeared in 1793, and to a lesser extent for his novels; second, for his marriage in 1797 to the remarkable feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, who died within a few months, and his daughter by her, Mary, who married the poet Shelley; and third, for the impetus given by his much publicised “optimism” to the most gloomy and influential of counter-theses, that of Thomas Malthus on population.

A *Fantasy of Reason*, Locke’s gripping biography with its perfect title—for Godwin was, as he says, “made for satire”—does justice to all three themes, particularly, perhaps, the first. Indeed, Locke is the kind of sympathetic, but in the best sense of the word argumentative, commentator whom Godwin, who could often be difficult, would have welcomed. *Political Justice* was once described as consisting of “borrowed sense and original nonsense” and there was some truth in the judgment if only because Godwin, arguing with himself and changing his mind in different editions, was prepared to push his argument to extremes, not fearing what he politely called “bold or paradoxical” conclusions.

The context, very different from that of mid-Victorian England, was as significant as the content, for from 1789 onwards, to bold spirits at least, “old things seemed to be passing away and nothing was dreamt of but the regeneration of the human

race.” The mood changed, of course, and whereas all Godwin’s writings in retrospect have a transient sheen, Malthus’s were to grip more than one future generation. Yet Godwin had a long-term view when he contemplated the implications of the perfectibility of man. Locke quotes one passage in which he claimed that it would be possible to halt a murderer by sheer strength of argument, though “we are not yet wise enough to make the sword drop out of the hands of our oppressors by the mere form of reason.” The words “not yet” deserve the exclamation mark Locke puts after them.

“The vices of youth”, Godwin believed, “spring not from nature, who is the kind and blameless mother of all her children.” Evil, which puzzled Gladstone, lay not in man but in the institutions which surrounded and moulded him and above all in the “opposition” this produced between “public and private good” and the “monopoly” they created of “advantages which reason directs to be left in common.” Victorian Liberalism was to generate clusters of new institutions—voluntary bodies; campaign committees; clubs; commissions of enquiry; departments of state. Godwin saw peril in every institution, even “liberal” institutions: they all checked or inflamed private judgment.

HIS MAIN MESSAGE is clear, and it was shared by many of his readers before they actually read him.

It is earnestly to be desired that each man was wise enough to govern himself without the interference of any compulsory restraint; and since government even in its best state is an evil, the object principally to be aimed at is, that we should have as little of it as the general pace of human society will permit.

In the second edition Godwin spoke of “the true euthanasia of government.” By the end of the 1790s such talk seemed absurdly extravagant, and one of the Whigs, who at first had sympathised with him, was making fun of “such fanciful chimeras as the golden mountain or the perfect man.” Already “the immortal Godwin” seemed a figure from a bygone age when he was in his early forties, and his worst years, years of beggary and bankruptcy, were still to come. His fellow Utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham—though they argued their philosophies in contrasting ways and drew quite different conclusions from it, as Elie Halévy pointed out years ago—seemed far younger in appearance and spirit.

It is still a matter of debate among historians as to how far Bentham influenced not only his contemporaries but subsequent Victorian generations. No one, however, has claimed any influence for Godwin at all. The irony of the final pension was underlined by the fact that it came from the Conservative Sir Robert Peel, who could write in the

⁴ *A Fantasy of Reason: The Life and Thought of William Godwin*. By DON LOCKE. Routledge, £13.50.



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kindest fashion in 1835 that he had “a grateful recollection of the pleasure” he had derived from “those Works, to which, with a just pride, he [Godwin] had referred.”

PEEL ONCE CALLED the word “liberal” an “odious” word. Yet this is the first, not the last, of his words. The Peelite contribution to mid-Victorian Liberalism, as Bradley describes it—not least to the making of its central character, Gladstone—was immense, although Peel gets only four references. His life touches Godwin, but between the golden years of the latter and the Victorians was the new and dividing industrial experience; the extension of the suffrage; and the passing of a new Poor Law, which while not Malthusian, was identified in the popular mind with Malthus.

The first of these great changes, which directed attention *inter alia* to the relative role of market and state and to what could be directed in society and what could and should not, is dealt with too briefly by Bradley, and the third, of crucial importance, is not dealt with at all. Yet as Richard Tompson, author of *The Charity Commission and the Age of Reform*,⁵ the most stimulating—and original—of the new books in the bundle puts it, the rarely disputed fact that “industry had a radical power to alter society” influenced the outlook of liberals and conservatives alike, while attitudes to the Poor Law, a substitute for a social policy, anticipated attitudes towards every later branch of social policy once it had been evolved. Ultimately the fate of Victorian Liberalism was bound up with questions of continuing poverty “in the midst of plenty” and the stigmas of pauperism in an age of extended franchise and more complete citizenship.

THE ISSUES ARE COMPLEX, more complex than partisans then and since conceded. Some concerned the dynamics of economic growth; others the social psychology of interest groups; more still the political and administrative process. Sir James Graham, Peel’s *alter ego*—he and Peel were described by *Punch* as two persons with one intellect—was criticised from the radical right for his dangerous “liberal principles” (“odious” though Peel may once have found them), and he had after all been a useful member of the Whig government during the preparation of the Reform Bill and the debates about it. Yet as Home Secretary between

1841 and 1846 he was equally strongly attacked from the radical left (the two extremes, paternalist and Chartist, sometimes converged) for his firm support of the Poor Law, his unwillingness to help Ashley with the Mines Bill of 1842, and his insistence that there were Malthusian obstacles to improvement of the condition of the working classes. The *Westminster Review*, Benthamite radical in its initial inspiration, described his policies generally as policies “of charity, never justice.” There is a topical ring in Graham’s answer to his own question about the Poor Law: “Was an able-bodied man entitled to relief without some kind of test?”—No, or it would not be relief at all but rather “subsistence upon the industry of others.” What can be bleaker than his letter to Peel on working-class education?

“Cheap bread, plenty of potatoes, low-priced American bacon, a little more cheese and butter will have a more pacifying effect than all the mental culture which any Government can supply.”

Yet Graham’s perceptions of the general social context were as clear as those of anyone in the country. The “labouring classes”, he believed, very often had “just cause of complaint against their masters.” The state of society was “artificial”: “it will be seen that a manufacturing people is not so happy as a rural population, and this is the foretaste of becoming the workshop of the world.”

WE CAN NOW APPRECIATE how reluctant many people were to enter that workshop. Manchester radicals had no doubts, but as Bradley points out, there were many Liberals, like Henry Lunn, the Methodist travel agent, who “derived their Liberalism not from Manchester but from Nazareth.” Peelites were more realistic than the paternalists described by David Roberts in his useful survey of *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*⁶: after all, Peel himself was known as the Spinning Jenny. Roberts’s book ends not in 1846, the year of the repeal of the Corn Laws, but in 1844, a year when even Gladstone could be described as paternalist. It may well have been the coexistence of the new classical political economy, widely thought of as a “dismal science”, and of continuing paternalist attitudes which made possible the politics of adaptation without which Britain could never have passed from industrial revolution to industrial routine.

Richard Tompson lays more stress on enquiry and reform than on adaptation, and his pioneering study of the Charity Commission, set up in 1818, is preceded by an admirably lucid general introduction in which he traces the development both of attitudes towards reform and of procedures to

⁵ *The Charity Commission and the Age of Reform*. By RICHARD TOMPSON. Routledge, £6.95: University of Toronto Press, \$17.50.

⁶ *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*. By DAVID ROBERTS. Croom Helm, £14.95.

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secure it. In it he quotes a passage from an earlier article by Roberts, in which he described "the Victorian administrative state" as "a practical contrivance shaped by men of various persuasions, all of whom were disturbed at the existence of ignorance, disease and misery in their changing society." "It was a very confused and disjointed state", Roberts went on, "and in all probability Bentham himself, the passionate lover of logic and efficiency, would have vigorously disclaimed its authorship."

THERE NEVER WAS one single mid-Victorian Liberal approach to that state. There was dialogue—this was of the essence of Liberalism—and there was development, development which could be considered as evolution. G. M. Young as usual got nearest to the heart of the matter in his essay "The Liberal Mind in Victorian England", written in 1948, when all the talk in Britain was of a welfare state.

In the mid-Victorian years, we settled down into an easy genial compromise between progress and tradition—years when a candidate, being asked about his political opinions might reply, and very often did reply "Sir, I am a liberal Conservative", which meant "our old institutions

have served us well. . . . But I have an open mind, and if there are any improvements which public opinion demands, then I am ready to consider them."

The "open mind" within the awkward, constraining moral and social frame, so brilliantly described by John Stuart Mill, was the key to Victorian Liberalism, not belief in the perfectibility of man; and not all Liberals with a capital L had it. Non-conformity, in particular, could add extra constraints in the name not of mind but of conscience.

Tompson is wise in his introduction to remind historians and others of the dangers of what he calls "the presentist assumption"—when the historian transports the perceptions of his own time into that of his subject. At the same time, a sense of historical perspective is necessary but often lacking in contemporary politics. Every book in this bundle, including Bernard Porter's *The Refugee Question in Mid-Victorian Politics*,⁷ the first to deal with this subject, is worth reading in this connection, particularly since many of them point to indispensable further reading on the history of the theory and practice of economic policy which is not well covered in any of them. And if it is said that politicians have no time to read, look at Gladstone's *Diary* and note, if necessary in awe, just how much he read. The last entry in Volume V is particularly appropriate for post-Godwinite politicians—"Read Young on the Province of Reason."

⁷ *The Refugee Question in Mid-Victorian Politics*. By BERNARD PORTER. Cambridge University Press, £15.00.

What the Devil Is It?

Recent Work on the Neolithic—By DAVID MILES

POST-WAR ARCHAEOLOGY in Europe, according to Professor Glyn Daniel, has followed four major trends: an expansion of worldwide perspectives; a growing awareness of the importance of American archaeology and its independent developmental sequences; the increasing utilisation of scientific aids, especially for dating; and the stimulus of intensive studies of protohistoric and historic periods.¹ It is difficult at close quarters to estimate which, if any, will prove to be the most significant of these, but the chief contender for the single most important event in post-war archaeology must be the discovery of radiocarbon dating.

The method was first devised and developed by

¹ Glyn Daniel, *A Hundred and Fifty Years of Archaeology* (1975).

Willard Libby at the Institute of Nuclear Studies in Chicago in the late 1940s and throughout the '50s, and in 1960 he was awarded a Nobel Prize for his work. The first radiocarbon dates from prehistoric Europe came as a surprise because they were so early. In contrast, samples from the East Mediterranean provided dates later than the well-established Egyptian chronology had led archaeologists to expect. The full impact of radiocarbon dating came only with the resolution of this problem. With the construction of an 8,000 year sequence of tree-rings, thanks to the longevity of the Bristlecone Pine, an independent check on the radiocarbon method has been provided. One of Libby's fundamental assumptions has been faulted; the amount of C14 in the atmosphere has not remained stable, and as a result C14 dates beyond about 2,000 years ago are progressively too young.

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Work on calibration by Hans Suess and more recently by Malcolm Clark² suggests that a radiocarbon date of 2000 bc should be set back by about 500 years, and one of 3000 bc by about 800 years. (A word to the uninitiated. Prehistory is now bedevilled by this added dimension of radiocarbon years and calendar years. The two planes need not get entangled if the standard conventions are used: a radiocarbon date is written as 2000 bc while its calendar equivalent—on the Clark calibration curve—would be 2520 BC.)

Sir Mortimer Wheeler was right in principle, if ahead of schedule, when he wrote in 1954: "We have been preparing timetables, let us now have some trains." The impact of radiocarbon dating and its calibration has not been simply on the refinement of prehistoric chronology but on the fundamental thinking of prehistorians. For too long archaeological explanation has suffered from oversimple invasion and diffusion hypotheses, and in the case of Europe the principle of *ex oriente lux*. Calibration of C14 dated the neolithic tombs of northern Europe and megalithic monuments such as Stonehenge earlier than sites such as Mycenae, and thereby dashed cold water on the idea of Mediterranean missionaries, metallurgists, and masons irradiating the barbarism of the north with their collective wisdom.

COLIN RENFREW has been in recent years one of the prehistorians most sensitive to the implications of the radiocarbon timetable and the need to start the trains running. A collection of eighteen articles and essays written by him between 1964 and 1978, with an introduction and linking comments, provides a coherent insight into the development of some of the main themes in recent European prehistory.³ As Renfrew emphasises, it would be naive to see radiocarbon dating as the *deus ex machina* of modern archaeology—dissatisfaction with the lack of theory and the overdependence on diffusionism had emerged before an established C14 chronology. Renfrew's introduction lays a welcome emphasis on the work of Tylor, Lubbock and Westropp in the 1860s and '70s and their often ignored theories of independent invention. One of the pieces in this collection—"The Aegean and the West Mediterranean",

written in 1967—begins to develop the theme, largely without the aid of C14 results, that formative processes should be studied within societies in their own terms.

Several essays from the earlier 1970s were important in helping to lay the new C14 railroad, but more important perhaps are the theoretical trains that have been set in motion; the interest in innovation, the emphasis on social rather than culture-based archaeology, and the interaction of sub-systems, notably trade, within prehistoric systems as a whole. A major scientific contribution has been and continues to be the characterisation of materials involved in prehistoric trade and the opportunity this presents to identify their source and patterns of distribution. The volcanic glass, obsidian, has proved particularly susceptible to optical spectroscopy, fission-track analysis, and neutron activation analysis. The problems of innovation apply not only to prehistoric peoples but to archaeologists themselves: Renfrew's essays show an enterprising willingness to put new techniques and archaeological theory into practice.

Many of the essential ideas present in Renfrew's essays have been taken up in a specific case study.⁴ Nowhere have the implications of C14 dating been felt so much as in the study of North European megalithic monuments. For many years it was assumed that the great neolithic tombs such as New Grange in Ireland or the Tumulus de Gavrinis in Brittany were inferior copies of the corbelled tombs of Mycenae, until calibrated radiocarbon dates placed the former as much as two-and-a-half thousand years earlier than the Mycenaean tombs. The islands of Orkney provide one of the best preserved collections of megalithic sites in Europe, with the added attraction that islands have self-defining boundaries. Renfrew and his team focused on the island of Rousay with its remarkable number of stalled cairns, and on three sites on the largest of the Orkney islands, Mainland: the stone circle known as the Ring of Brogar, the finest of the chambered tombs, Maes Howe, and the chambered cairn of Quanterness, although only the last was extensively excavated. The aim, however, was not simply to investigate a number of individual sites but more ambitiously to explain the development of Orcadian society through the Neolithic.

Utilising the available radiocarbon dates, Renfrew constructs an outline chronology for Neolithic Orkney beginning around 3700 BC, with simple tombs such as Bigland Round and slightly later the stalled cairns of Rousay. The transitional phase between Early and Late Neolithic (c. 3300–3000 BC) is marked by the change-over from the pottery known as Unstan ware to the flat-bottomed, decorated Grooved ware vessels. The stalled cairns built on Rousay at this time are the largest of the group; on Mainland the Quanterness-Quoyness type tombs appear. During the late

² R. M. Clark, "A calibration curve for radiocarbon dates", *Antiquity*, XLIX (1975), pp. 251–266.

³ *Problems in European Prehistory*. By COLIN RENFREW. Edinburgh University Press, paper £5.00. Edinburgh University Press has a welcome practice of bringing together coherent collections of essays by individual archaeologists, such as Stuart Piggott, *Ruins in a Landscape* (1976).

⁴ *Investigations in Orkney*. By COLIN RENFREW. Society of Antiquaries, distributed by Thames & Hudson, £20.

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Neolithic the most sophisticated tomb of all, Maes Howe, showing a mastery of local building material, was constructed, and shortly afterwards the great henges, the Ring of Brogar and the Standing Stones of Stenness.

THE EXCAVATION OF part of the Quanterness tomb throws fascinating light on the Neolithic population of Orkney and its methods of communal burial. By meticulous analysis of the 12,500 human bones, J. T. Chesterman estimates that at least 157 bodies (or parts of them) were present. On the basis of the proportion of the tomb excavated, the total number of people buried there was probably about four hundred. In 1925 O. G. S. Crawford had noted that certain bones seemed to be in short supply in Neolithic tombs on the Cotswolds, and suggested exhumation prior to interment in the tomb. This practice is well known in other societies, from 19th-century Polynesia and North America to the prehistoric communities of central Turkey. At the Neolithic settlement of Çatal Hüyük in Turkey wall paintings show exposed and headless bodies being cleaned up by vultures. In Orkney, exposure (though bodies were protected from predators) or preliminary burial probably took place. Skulls and long bones were in distinctly short supply in the tomb and may have been retained as part of an ancestor cult. This was certainly the practice among the megalithic peoples of the Marquesas Islands, visited but misleadingly described by Herman Melville in *Typee*.

Among the population of Quanterness, according to Chesterman, the mean life expectancy (not including neonatal deaths) was only 20 to 25 years. A remarkably high number seem to have died in childhood or adolescence, and of 85 people who reached 20 years of age only 7 lived to be over 30. The skeletal remains suggest that the group of farmers who utilised Quanterness consisted of about 13 to 20 individuals at any one time.

Renfrew argues that these early Neolithic communities were small-scale, autonomous, segmentary societies with group membership on the basis of lineage and residence, and that all members of the community had equal access to the tomb. Tombs were more than just burial places for the dead. They probably acted as markers, the equivalent of flying the flag, laying a physical and

ancestral claim to the land around, and signalling the identity of the residence group.

Neolithic society was not static. Renfrew attempts to trace its development by analysing the labour input required for the construction of the main monuments. The Quanterness cairn, it is estimated, would have required about 10,000 man hours—not an impossible amount for the size of community proposed. In contrast the three larger sites built after 3000 BC, Maes Howe, Brogar and Stenness, are of an entirely different order of magnitude. The ditch around the Ring of Brogar alone would require 80,000 man hours and Maes Howe possibly 100,000 man hours. Renfrew believes that these three sites reflect the internal evolution of Orkney society from the small-scale and segmented to the group-orientated chieftainship, for the labour requirements of the three major monuments show the ability to muster larger groups. Significantly all three sites are to be found on the central neck of Mainland, geographically the ideal place from which to exercise overall control of the islands.

THE BEST KNOWN SITES of the late Neolithic in Britain are the large henge monuments. The name is somewhat misleading: it derives from the “hanging” stones of Stonehenge. But none of the other henge monuments have these lintels. Instead they are characterised by an external bank and internal ditch around an oval or roughly circular enclosure. In Southern Britain there are five henges of massive proportions: Stonehenge itself, Avebury and Marden in Wiltshire, Mount Pleasant near Dorchester in Dorset, and Waulud’s Bank in Bedfordshire. In the late 1960s and early ’70s excavation was carried out in three of these by Dr Geoffrey Wainwright.⁵ In Orkney, Renfrew’s strategy consisted of fieldwork, geographical analysis, small-scale problem-orientated excavation, and biological sampling. In contrast, Wainwright’s approach involved large-scale excavation to uncover internal structures. The culmination of Wainwright’s excavation programme is the publication of the Mount Pleasant report,⁶ admirably clear and well organised, as were his previous analyses.

Invasion hypotheses may be out of fashion but the beginning of the Neolithic in Britain is still associated with newcomers, bringing in domesticates such as sheep and cereals which did not naturally occur in this country. Even so, the close relationship of Mesolithic communities to plants and animals and their attempts to modify the environment have encouraged speculation that adaptation from hunter-gathering to farming may not be so clear-cut as V. Gordon Childe’s term “the Neolithic Revolution” suggests. For instance, recent work on Mesolithic and Neolithic flint

⁵ G. J. Wainwright, “The excavation of a Late Neolithic Enclosure at Marden, Wiltshire”, *Antiquaries Journal* 51 (1971), pp. 177–239. G. J. Wainwright & I. H. Longworth, *Durrington Walls: Excavation 1966–1968*, Report of the Research Committee, Society of Antiquaries of London (1971).

⁶ *Mount Pleasant, Dorset: Excavation 1970–1971*. By G. J. WAINWRIGHT. Society of Antiquaries, distributed by Thames & Hudson, £20.

supplies points to the continuity and contact which existed among the developing population of Britain about 4000 BC.⁷ As in Orkney, Southern England has a Neolithic sequence which reflects internal evolution. Long barrows and causewayed camps signal the territories of the early and middle Neolithic groupings, with the henges and round barrow cemeteries appearing in the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. Again the picture is of expanding territorial units, increasing centralisation of authority, and the stratification of society.

Mount Pleasant lies on a spur of ground overlooking the valley of the South Winterbourne. Two-and-a-quarter miles to the south-west and visible from the site are the massive ramparts of Maiden Castle, the hillfort captured by Vespasian during the Claudian Conquest. These two sites must be viewed together as an oscillating focus of settlement which extended through British prehistory. Maiden Castle was the first centre of emphasis with a causewayed camp, while Mount Pleasant showed only a slight trace of settlement. About 2500 BC the Mount Pleasant henge was constructed within a woody area. Inside stood a massive timber building

with five concentric circles of posts, similar to those previously found at Durrington Walls and Marden. Like the Orkney henges these are associated with Grooved ware pottery. The most unexpected and important development at Mount Pleasant was the construction about 2100 BC of a palisade enclosure within the still extant earthworks of the henge. The oak timbers were set 3 metres into the ground and were an estimated 9 metres long. Nine hundred acres of oak forest must have been felled to provide the timber for the 800 metre circuit. During this phase the massive timber building inside the henge was replaced by a cove—a setting of stones. At some unspecified date (possibly around the end of the third millennium) the palisade was destroyed, partly by intensive burning. During the second millennium settlement continued on Mount Pleasant, probably of an agricultural nature, as the environmental evidence points to intensification of arable activity. The focus then seems to have shifted once more to Maiden Castle: from about 1000 BC the sequence of defences was begun, culminating in the Durotrigan hillfort which presented such a massive appearance yet was such an insubstantial obstacle to the Roman legionaries. Under Roman influence a new town was set up about two miles to the north-east of Maiden Castle, the site of modern Dorchester.

⁷ V. Care, "The Production and Distribution of Mesolithic Axes in Southern England", *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 45 (1979), pp. 93–102.

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RKP

GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT'S AIM is to examine the sequence of settlement at Dorchester: he is less concerned with theoretical considerations than Renfrew, nor is he preoccupied with speculation about the ceremonial nature of henges, which he tends to see as central places with a basically socio-economic function. Even more rigidly factual are the reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England). The Commission's latest production, *Stonehenge and its Environs*,⁸ is a breakaway from their usual massive, county-based tomes. It is in paperback, and published by Edinburgh University Press rather than the usual outlet, Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The standard of production is of the consistently high quality associated with the Commission, and the three folding maps of about 37 square kilometres around Stonehenge show the landscape and land-use around the site with great clarity. It is a very welcome development to see the Commission treating archaeological sites as living entities with modern problems. The sections on the condition of the monuments and recommendations for conservation are in the grand tradition of *A Matter of Time* (1960), the RCHM's attempt to highlight the effects of gravel extraction on archaeology in English river valleys. Too often, earlier volumes have provided meticulous gazetteers to sites in the process of destruction.

Stonehenge and its Environs represents archaeology at its most austere and factual. The RCHM would never (on the record) answer Lord Byron's question (*Don Juan*, XI.25):

*The Druid's groves are gone—so much the better.
Stonehenge is not—but what the devil is it?*

But there is no shortage of volunteers. Stonehenge attracts charlatans and quacks, gulls, mountebanks, fakers and publishers as a rhinoceros attracts tick-birds. Latter-day druids, ley-line hunters, UFO-spotters, and Atlantis-seekers all claim it as their own. As a result archaeologists have for the most part kept well away from the astronomical aspects of Stonehenge lest they should be infected by rampant lunacy. Adopting an approach as austere as the RCHM's, Professor Alexander Thom has succeeded in making the subject respectable. Unfortunately few archaeologists are capable of penetrating Thom's uncompromising statistics and astronomical expertise, though the

⁸ *Stonehenge and its Environs: Monuments and Land Use*. By THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MONUMENTS (ENGLAND). Edinburgh University Press, £4.

A series of interesting illustrations of Stonehenge appears in an attractive little book by Stuart Piggott; a 14th-century manuscript shows Merlin lifting a lintel with the ease of a forklift truck carrying empty boxes. *Antiquity Depicted: Aspects of Archaeological Illustration*. By STUART PIGGOTT. Thames & Hudson, £3.50.

sheer bulk and integrity of his work have impressed even the most sceptical.⁹ Consequently one could only feel relief and gratitude at the appearance in 1978 of J. E. Wood's *Sun, Moon and Standing Stones*, now published in paperback.¹⁰ His admirably well-balanced book clears the low-lying cloud from the skies of megalithic astronomy. Few archaeologists would now go along with what Gordon Childe wrote in 1930:

Indeed it is fantastic to imagine that the ill-clad inhabitants of these boreal isles should shiver night long in rain and gale peering through the driving mists to note eclipses and planetary movements in our oft-veiled skies.

It is perhaps less fantastic when one realises that "the ill-clad inhabitants" were capable of building Maes Howe or Stonehenge without any help from Mycenae, and, thanks to Professor H. H. Lamb, we now know that the weather was actually better in the late Neolithic than it is these days.

Nevertheless, many archaeologists who accept the astronomical significance of some megalithic sites cannot go far along the trajectory taken by Professor Thom. In particular, his supposedly universal megalithic yard of .829 metres in use from Shetland to Brittany has attracted criticism from those who have failed to find it in sites such as the Sanctuary in Wiltshire. The sceptical see the megalithic yard as no more than a natural measurement—a pace or an arm-length—of the type commonly used in sub-numerate communities with little concern for mathematical exactitude.

Aubrey Burl's *Prehistoric Avebury*¹¹ is primarily a response to the lunatic fringe. He evidently feels that the devil should not have all the best tunes and so has written a few of his own. This is in no way to criticise the book, for RCHM reports do not make scintillating reading and there is a place for this kind of up-market popularisation. The book is attractively produced, authoritative, and a refreshing antidote to the hocus-pocus school of publishing. Avebury is a surprisingly neglected site and Burl's book deserves a wide audience. It's a pity, though, that it does not include among the scores of photographs a plan of the site and its environs.

⁹ *Megalithic Remains in Britain and Brittany*. By A. THOM and A. S. THOM. Oxford University Press, £8.95.

¹⁰ *Sun, Moon and Standing Stones*. By J. E. WOOD. Oxford University Press, paper £3.50.

¹¹ *Prehistoric Avebury*. By AUBREY BURL. Yale University Press, £8.95, \$19.95. *Rings of Stone: The Prehistoric Stone Circles of Britain and Ireland*. By AUBREY BURL. Photographs by EDWARD PIPER. Frances Lincoln/Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £9.95. This book is remarkable principally for its beautiful photographs of standing stones. (If Neolithic man was not an astronomer he must have been Henry Moore.)

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THERE IS INCREASING WILLINGNESS on the part of archaeologists like Burl to stick their necks out, to wander from the groves of academe into the jungles of speculation. Burl does this well, wobbling occasionally between poetry and purple prose but always with one foot firmly in the data. Much less successful is *Stonehenge and the Origins of Western Culture*, by two Americans, Leon Stover and Bruce Kraig.¹² The book is dominated by the Indo-European folk movements and legends beloved of Professor Marija Gimbutas, by anthropological anecdotes of potlatches and Big Men, and by the bands, tribes and chiefdoms of Elman Service. The whole mixture is an unhappy one, laced with jargon, dreadful distribution maps, and alarming reconstruction drawings (the artist should study Alan Sorrell's use of discreet British mist and rain to mask the uncertainties). Presumably this book and Aubrey Burl's reflect the interest in Stonehenge across the Atlantic. This site is the second most visited after the Tower of London and, according to a recent report,¹³ two thirds of its visitors are foreign tourists. The one thing most visitors seem to agree on is the need for an exhibition centre and more information.

INFORMATION (and its dissemination) is currently one of archaeology's main problems. Glyn Daniel might have mentioned in his list of recent trends the qualitative explosion in the amount of data available to archaeologists,

¹² *Stonehenge and the Origins of Western Culture*. By LEON E. STOVER and BRUCE KRAIG. Heinemann, £7.50.

¹³ *Restrictions at Stonehenge: The Reaction of Visitors to Limitations in Access*. By SHEILA BAINBRIDGE. HMSO, £2.25.

¹⁴ J. D. Evans, "Prehistory in the Seventies, at Home and Abroad", Presidential Address, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 43 (1977), pp. 1–12.

¹⁵ *The Prehistory of Europe*. By PATRICIA PHILLIPS. Allen Lane, £7.95. This excellent and wide-ranging survey—theoretically, geographically and chronologically—should help to allay Professor Evans' fears. It follows in the footsteps of Stuart Piggott's *Ancient Europe*. Let us hope it soon appears in paperback. About *The Bronze Age in Barbarian Europe: from Megaliths to Celts* by Jacques Briard (Routledge, £8.75) the less said the better.

¹⁶ *Gussage All Saints: An Iron Age Settlement in Dorset*. By G. J. WAINWRIGHT. HMSO, £18.

¹⁷ *Introduction to British Prehistory*. By J. V. S. MEGAW, D. D. A. SIMPSON, et al. Leicester University Press, £19, paper £7.95. In spite of the authors' disclaimer, this book will become the standard textbook for some time to come, and is an invaluable and much-needed guide through the thicket of British prehistory. It is rather difficult to see which of the numerous authors wrote what.

particularly through increasing state involvement in rescue projects and survey work. Professor J. D. Evans¹⁴ has warned against ex-imperial countries "retreating into a cosy preoccupation exclusively with their own national past" but this is not an inevitable corollary of more intensive work at home.¹⁵ There is, though, real difficulty in coping with the information explosion. British archaeology is fortunate in having a tradition of publication in local journals, but in the United States much essential material is currently being filed away, unpublished and inaccessible, as a result of the growth in federally financed projects. The relative trickle of British excavation reports in the past was traditionally channelled into the Stationery Office, the Society of Antiquaries, and some national or local journals. Now that the trickle is becoming a flow—and not before time—there are problems. Partly they are caused by soaring costs: recent reports start at £18 and can reach as high as £80, for they now contain much more detailed specialist studies both on traditional materials such as pottery, and on relatively new subjects such as insects, plants and animal bones, although these are often of specific interest to a very small audience.

Archaeologists must decide what they need from excavation reports, and encourage flexibility in methods of publication. Her Majesty's Stationery Office has produced Geoffrey Wainwright's report on the Iron Age site of Gussage All Saints¹⁶ with admirable, if unusual, speed. The excavation is of especial importance as it provides a comparison with the expertly but only partially dug settlement at Little Woodbury, a much over-used type site for the southern British Iron Age. No doubt there will be complaints at the book's austere appearance and far from austere price, but the internal layout, essentially adopted from that used by the Council for British Archaeology, is a useful one for this type of publication. Archaeologists will look to it as a guide not only to the Iron Age but also to the interpretation of recent Department of the Environment publication guidelines.

THE INFORMATION EXPLOSION, unmanageable beast that it may be, is a reflection of increasingly extensive and intensive work in British archaeology. Gazetteers from the RCHM provide the background data, and projects such as Renfrew's in Orkney the theoretical problem-orientated model for the investigation of prehistoric societies as a whole.¹⁷ Sites like Stonehenge and Avebury need no longer stand isolated in the floodlights of naive wonderment, but can increasingly be seen against the whole complex background of contemporary settlement and society.

Homo Sapiens & All That

Unfinished History—By JOHN BOSSY

“I’VE GOT THIS amazing book.”

“What about?”

“The history of the world.”

“Not quite my field.”

“By a fellow called Thomas. Know him?”

“Yes, he does witches.”

“Really? It doesn’t say so. I got the feeling he didn’t believe in that sort of thing. Wait a minute, there’s a note on p.357. ‘Witches are usually such as one destitute of friends, bowed down with years, laden with infirmities’, wrote a contemporary.’ At least that’s what he says he wrote. It was in the 16th century. I can’t see much else. He puts them in inverted commas, too.”

“That doesn’t sound right.”

“Your chap write novels?”

“Don’t think so.”

“Is he in private practice?”

“Certainly not.”

“Does he know a place called *Il Trebbio*? Some people called Scaretti. This fellow thinks a lot of it.”

“No, wrong man.”

“Well, *Il Trebbio* seems to be pretty central to this Thomas. On a clear day you can see the Middle Ages. That sort of place. You can have undisturbed, innocent and somnambulatory reflection there. I shouldn’t think he’d have unfinished his book without it.”

“Come again?”

“*Unfinished History of the World*.¹ He’s aspired merely to cut out a few chunks of rock, and give them so far as possible certain shapes. He hasn’t had time to finish the shaping to full satisfaction. No one could have, he says.”

“Even with *Il Trebbio*?”

“Apparently not. All the same, the book’s got what every intelligent man or woman needs to know about the history of the planet. Dramatic and scholarly too.”

“You could have waited for the paperback. He might have finished it by then.”

“Well, I got the impression it was rather now or

never. I mean there’s some pretty impressive stuff about how time is running out. Some French fellow called Chaunu says we’ve got ten years. Seems that Plato thought much the same.”

“I don’t think he can have been right. It was a while ago.”

“Yes, but it seems Plato had this idea that you can always reverse an apparently fatal tendency towards decay, however late the hour. So I thought it was pretty important to do something about it now.”

“Like buying the book.”

“Exactly.”

“Do you think it’ll do the trick?”

“I shouldn’t be at all surprised. It’s a real eye-opener. Stuff you’d never have thought of. Like about forks. Did you know people ate with their fingers till the 16th century? Except in Byzantium, that is, and a bit of Italy. Then Catherine de Medici brought the fork to France. Didn’t catch on, though. Apparently you couldn’t make them until the 18th century, then Boulton and Watt worked out how. Started the Industrial Revolution.”

“I thought Erasmus had something to do with it.”

“The Industrial Revolution?”

“No, I doubt if he’d have fancied that. Still, it does look as if he might have got it started by mistake. In the end, anyway. Like Burckhardt said.”

“The Burckhardt who thought modern man started in Italy?”

“That’s him.”

“I was quite surprised by that, but Thomas seems pretty impressed by him. Like Plato and Chaunu.”

“Perhaps he went to *Il Trebbio* too. But thanks for the bit about the fork. If there are lots of things like that in the book I might borrow it off you.”

“WELL, THERE’S THIS terribly important thing about water. I wanted to ask you about that. It seems that people who get their water from overhead are basically different from people who get it along the ground.”

¹ *An Unfinished History of the World*. By HUGH THOMAS. Hamish Hamilton, £12.50.

"They need umbrellas."

"That's not what he says. I can't see umbrellas in the index."

"Pity. I thought he might have had some *aperçus* about the umbrella too. There's that poem about the rain falling on the just and on the unjust fella."

"It doesn't in Thomas. It falls mainly on the just."

"So it does in the poem."

"Yes, well it seems it's like this: when it comes along the ground there's usually either too much or too little of it because it's been raining too little or too hard somewhere else. So you need water works. That means a lot of government, and pyramids, and things like that. The first emperor of China was head of the Water Board."

"I see."

"He says there are other things as well, but that seems to be the main one. On the other hand, if it just comes down nicely from time to time, from clouds, you don't need the government to bring it to your field, or stop it coming. So you can argue with it more and have law and parliaments and Magna Carta and that sort of thing."

"Why don't the people where it comes along the ground go to places where it comes down?"

"I suppose they don't want to be taken for nomads. After all, they're in the Age of Agriculture and you can't put the sundial back. Though I must

say it seems to have gone on for an awful long time. You'd think they'd have got bored and said to hell with it. Wait a minute. I think that's what religion's for. You'd miss the boat for immortality. Soul and soil, something like that."

"Suppose it rains too much?"

"I think a bit too much is quite a good thing. There was a bit too much in the early Roman Republic, and they were a pretty upstanding lot. Cincinnatus. Cato the Elder. Looks as if he'd been in the rain quite a bit, doesn't he? In his woollies. Then it rather eased off and things went downhill. Emperors doling out corn on the social security. Things didn't pick up until the end of the Middle Ages. Little Ice Age. Bad for vineyards in Somerset but good for reading."

"I always thought it was sunny in the Renaissance."

"They must have had the odd day. Look, this was what I wanted to ask you about. It struck me it was just as well we didn't get really too much of it, like in India or Manchester, because I imagine you need a fair bit of government to take it away again. We'd have been back to square one. Think of Louis XIV in Lancashire."

"With all those Catholics too."

"I'll say. A millibar here or there, and we'd never have got to Our Times at all. They start on p.243 and unfinish on p.618. I must say I've been skip-

new from Manchester

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ping, but it seems we've been having industrial triumphs and political failures so things are a bit dicey and we'd better do the right thing now. Like Plato and Chaunu say. It was a good idea to abolish all that agriculture and irrigation and have capitalism and rockets instead, but religion seems to have got away and mixed itself up with politics so the pyramids have got larger instead of smaller and the thing to do now is to have less taxes and more little communities and companies. Then we might pull through."

"I'm wondering who gets the rockets."

"We could use them to make rain."

'GOOD IDEA. Look, when you've finished Thomas you might try Bowle.² Starts with the cave paintings and doesn't quite get to Mrs Thatcher, but the

² *A History of Europe*. By JOHN BOWLE. Secker & Warburg, £12.50.

same sort of thing."

"Does *he* think we'll get through the next ten years?"

"He seems quite hopeful. Europe's his answer."

"Perhaps he was at *Il Trebbio* too."

"No, Bruges. *Collège d'Europe*."

"Kind of history of the firm, then. Like Unilever."

"More or less. He's keener on the Middle Ages, and gives you more dates."

"That'll be a help. I don't want to get confused, though. I mean with all these decisions I've got to make, it might put me off my stroke."

"I don't know, they agree about quite a lot. Dogs for instance. Man's first friend. Eight thousand BC."

"More dogs, less witches, eh? Thomas says fifteen thousand. Started agriculture."

"I don't see Dido starting agriculture. What does she say?"

"She wants her dinner."

The New Insularity

On British Protohistory—By CHARLES THOMAS

THE MILLENNIUM-PLUS, from AD 43 to 1066—Claudius's invasion to the battle of Hastings—was probably the most formative in British history, and certainly the one that shaped us as we are. Rudyard Kipling must, somewhere, have versified these sentiments. My (fruitless) search for an appropriate quote culled from his multifarious poems became side-tracked into pleasant speculation. Since Kipling (like J. R. Green before him) saw the whole process as, if not wholly finite, having reached a peak of fulfilment in the latter years of Victoria's reign, what would he have thought of the Welsh language activists and the Scottish devolution referendum? What *did* he think of O'Connell Street at Easter, 1916? His own version of the "Three Musketeers" motif, his Soldiers Three, stood for the unified Greater Britain: Ortheris, the neolithic Cockney, Mulvaney, the stage Gael who could have stepped out of the *fin-de-siècle* Abbey Theatre, and Learoyd, slow, gigantic, the Yorkshire Dane. And now we have no Ireland (save for that embarrassing enclave); instead, we have a new academic adjective, *Insular*, which is shorter to write than "British and Irish", and gets us clear of that *bêtise* (hourly perpetrated in our metropolis) exemplified when anyone uses "English" to mean "British."

Archaeology being so recent a discipline, it is

curious that even within the European community the term *prehistory* (or equivalent) does not always mean the same concept, let alone the same chunk of time past. The egocentric French, surprisingly, see *préhistoire* as all the human past before writing, and thus potential historical records, appeared anywhere. Our prehistory ends only when our own history begins, probably (arguably, anyhow) the 1st century BC. When Rome came, Britannia entered Europe—permanently. Kipling, who had a very much greater sense of history than most historians, saw this when he made his British Roman sing of "The very Rome . . . City beneath whose oldest height—The Race began!" This was in 406, and the *cives* of Britain were as much the sons of Romulus and Remus as Augustus himself.

All this, and much more, one might legitimately suppose in 1980, should form the core of national historical education; study of Britain (with Ireland) after prehistory proper ends, and before that phase of conventional document-based history that might open with Domesday Book, 1085–86. Not a bit of it. We don't even have a name for this period, one which Continental colleagues would call our "protohistory." We have, instead, too many names for too constrained aspects, or temporal parts, of it. Dismissing at once the fatuous "Dark Ages" and unwieldy "Migration and Early Medieval", we can

still find, and in daily use, a dozen or more labels like sub-Roman, Late Saxon and Viking, Anglo-Norse, etc.

There is no difficulty in explaining this short-coming, which merely reflects compartmentalised research and education (notably higher education). Roman Britain belongs to archaeology or classics. Anglo-Saxon attitudes form part of history; if tangibly manifested, archaeology; if language and literature are involved, then English, a discipline that also covers Old Norse (the Viking speech). Wales and Scotland have their own histories, but ones intranationally expounded mainly in medieval and subsequent format. The sad history of Ireland is taught from some very curious textbooks indeed. New and important topics—they are rapidly becoming vital—like place-name study and dialectology, presumably because they centre on our philological past, find homes (if any) in schools of English.

Prescription for any ailment must follow proper diagnosis, in Academia as in medicine; and the diagnosis is facile enough. We—the workers in British protohistory during the last 30 years—have suffered corporately from inadequate preliminary education, leading to the mental counterparts of asthma, myopia and strabismus; and I extend the last word to its (OED, 1844) figurative sense of “perversity of intellectual perception.” I draw attention to two phenomena. One is the steady rise, almost the rehabilitation, of that brave old figure of British letters, the polymathic autodidact, who individually tries to portray some part of our national protohistory through a combined exploitation of archaeology, history, language, and the specialised offshoots of all three (the late John Morris finely exemplified this). The other, and at a time when the post-war boom in adult education has been rather flattened out by external stringency, is the tremendous national interest, not just in very local history—this is sometimes just the up-market end of the nostalgia industry—but in national history, and particularly in national protohistory.

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE for this assertion? Half a dozen publishers could supply plenty,

¹ *The Celts*. By T. G. E. POWELL. New edition. Revised by STUART PIGGOTT. Thames & Hudson, £8.50.

² *The Llandaff Charters*. By WENDY DAVIES. National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, £7.00.

³ *Insular Manuscripts—6th to the 9th Century*. By J. G. ALEXANDER. Heyden & Son Ltd./Harvey Millar, £38.00.

⁴ *The End of Roman Britain. British Series 71*. Edited by P. J. CASEY. British Archaeological Reports (122 Banbury Road, Oxford), £6.00. *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History, 1. British Series 72*. Edited by SONIA CHADWICK HAWKES et al. British Archaeological Reports, £6.50.

beginning with the oldest and largest series, Thames & Hudson's *Ancient Peoples and Places*. Some earlier volumes are already classics, eminently worth high-level revision and re-issue.¹ At least one Book Club trades extensively in this direction, catering for an apparently endless demand for volumes dealing with Celtic, Roman, Saxon and medieval Britain. And good luck to them; this topping-up of print runs has probably ensured the appearance of many works which, without it, would still be shuffling from one frowning cost-squeezed publisher to another. The plain fact is that people *are* interested, and the interest is not entirely passive; it fuels (for example) the extramural educative world, one which has its own curate's-egg printed output. And, jogging along comfortably beside all this literature, television and radio, the Sunday supplements, and the set-piece exhibitions (like the current British Museum Vikings) buttress the main runner.

Where one can give three hearty cheers, indeed, is in the area of detailed expansion (outwards from Roman Britain—which means, in the main, Roman *England*; from Arthur, whoever he was; and from the J. R. Green Hengist-and-Horsa syndrome). This can be geographical. Celtic Wales is still alive. Her literary history dates from the late 7th century, and its oldest monuments are now being treated properly, excitingly, and productively.² Writing itself, partly surviving from Roman times, but mainly reinforced from Europe in post-Roman times and in ecclesiastical settings, gave us the nearest thing we ever produced to calligraphy as a total art-form³—if not quite, as Bernhard Karlgren wrote of Chinese script, “a genuine product of the creative power of the Chinese mind . . . the mother of Chinese pictorial art”, then still a powerful indication of a cultural nexus overriding ethnic and linguistic divisions. And in discussing these centuries, between the end of Roman Britain and Alfred's Wessex, we can be thankful for the rise (hardly the reappearance) of a particular *genre*. This is “the instant volume”, the collected essays or papers from a thematic symposium, where “instant” can mean as little as six months or a year, the product is sturdy rather than elegant, and the price reflects the new technologies of electric typing, lithographic printing and hot-press binding. So important have these become in any study of first-millennium Insular history/archaeology that one cannot safely compile major synthetic works without a sagging row of such tall, limp, fact-stuffed *oeuvres*.⁴

THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE a welcome emphasis on purely literary aspects of Anglo-Saxondom, and the archaeologist who, having come to his trade through geography and applied science, or worst of all a purely archaeological degree-course, fails to

spend some years getting abreast of history, documentary sources, and languages must be content to remain (as, sadly, very many do) no more than a technician.

The material is readily to hand; even, for a start, at sound and wholly intelligible introductory levels.⁵ That massive compendium, *English Historical Documents*, Vol. I, long affectionately known for short as "EHD One", has just been reissued, slightly updated, by its original author, still very much *doyenne* of her school.⁶ And, at the same time, from those splendid academic publishing houses which are "provincial" only in the sense that they will put their money where their hearts are, combining low-cost overheads with high standards, we continue to receive gobbets of British protohistory at the primary stage. Is there a market for area-studies of the Anglo-Saxon charters? They believe so at Leicester, a university which Herbert

Finberg and William Hoskins made the focus of "English local history" (this phrase may now require redefining), and they are right to believe this, if scholars like Margaret Gelling support them.⁷ Northern history—this is an established term for the study of a largely unitary past within the northern English counties, as since 1966 the prestigious annual *Northern History* makes plain—tends to come out of Leeds. Here, if anywhere in England, one's strictures about the lack of interdisciplinary outlook must be mollified. At this university, archaeology, history and languages *are* brought and taught together, and in a context that involves much of Europe. The published products⁸ are not esoteric, and only the imprint is local; what emerges has invariably wider importance.

⁵ *The Saxon Age—Commentaries of an Era*. By A. F. SCOTT. Croom Helm, £6.95.

⁶ *English Historical Documents. Vol. I, c. 500–1042*. Second edition. By DOROTHY WHITELOCK. Eyre Methuen, £40.00.

⁷ *The Early Charters of the Thames Valley*. By MARGARET GELLING. Leicester University Press. £14.00.

⁸ *Names, Words, and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement*. Edited by P. H. SAWYER. School of History, University of Leeds (Leeds LS2 9JT), £3.50.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY of the English settlements, which in ethnic terms involved Angles proper, Saxons proper, Jutes, some Frisians, and (before the 5th century, in a slightly different way) other less easily distinguished peoples, has moved slowly but surely from a string of recitals centred upon graves and grave-goods. If there are still not lacking those brave souls who, with varying degrees of success, attempt to produce generalised summaries

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Editor: T. H. Aston

Business Manager: M. A. Vaisey

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of Anglo-Saxon art and archaeology,⁹ emphases have tended to settle upon two particular facets. These are (and jargon is useful here): in-depth studies of specific archaeological material; and settlement—or landscape-orientated synoptic essays resting on one major site or distinctive region. Those who feel moved, or have been in any way persuaded, to give us further fat accounts of Anglo-Saxons in all their aspects must digest not only the lessons but indeed the details of specialist work. This forms a very good argument for a ten-year moratorium here; frankly, no one could now produce a worthwhile 1980 version of the old *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, the 1937 Collingwood and Myres 500-page classic.

Surprisingly, quite basic components of Anglo-Saxon archaeology are only now being relatively fully explored and published. In *Wheel-Thrown Pottery in Anglo-Saxon Graves*,¹⁰ Vera Evison is doing much more than giving us a *catalogue raisonnée* of uninspiring pottery bottles found in Kentish cemeteries; her study delineates the evidence, now incontrovertible, that the end of Roman Britain did not mean the end of Channel crossings. I quote her concluding sentence:

Perhaps also some part of the distribution of Frankish bottles in England may be accounted for by some Anglo-Saxons initiating the earliest stage of a constant, and still continuing stream of

returning English travellers abroad who set foot on the Channel boat with a bottle of wine resolutely clutched to their bosoms as a last reminder of foreign delights.

The “settlement-history” contributions spring, not from constant and devoted returns to one corpus of objects, but the same applied to one locality (in excavational terms, often confined to annual holidays). The greatest such, possibly better known and appreciated in academic circles abroad than necessarily here, centres on Wharram Percy in the Yorkshire Wolds.¹¹ It began in 1950; it still flourishes; eventually, much of our Northern protohistory will be affected by the findings, and despite consumer-resistance to the open-ended series of instalment reports, the student will neglect any and all of these at his peril. The North of England is different, as Asa Briggs and many fellow-Northerners remind us in so many ways—from food, through broadcasting, to social attitudes. In Celtic and Saxon terms, what used to be (pre-1974) Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland were (a) Anglian, not just “Anglo-Saxon”, (b) of particular intrinsic merit because Bede, our greatest though not earliest national historian, wrote from and predominantly about the pre-731 North, and (c) really only partly Anglian, the other part being the surviving British.

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We & They

THIS LAST THEME, which bids fair to provide the protohistoric British counterparts to what German colleagues call *Kontinuität*, underlies new and competent explorations of archaeology-cum-history in northern sub-regions;¹² and it forms the principal topic of the extended essay, by way of conclusions, in the, alas! over-delayed report of the work at Yeavering.¹³ This was, technically, among the most remarkable accomplishments of excavation and interpretation in post-War Europe; the sub-title “An Anglo-British Centre of early Northumbria” may appear to pre-empt the conclusion, but does so

⁹ *Anglo-Saxon England*. By LLOYD and JENNIFER LAING. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £6.95.

¹⁰ *Wheel-Thrown Pottery in Anglo-Saxon Graves*. By VERA I. EVISON. Royal Archaeological Institute (55 Silchester Court, London Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 6HT), £5.00.

¹¹ *Wharram: A Study of Settlement on the Yorkshire Wolds. Vol. I. Domestic Settlement, 1: Areas 10 and 6* By D. D. ANDREWS and G. MILNE. Society for Medieval Archaeology, (6 Church Grove, Little Chalfont, Amersham, Bucks. HP6 6SH), £7.00.

¹² *The Anglo-Saxon Settlement of Humberside*. By BRUCE N. EAGLES. *British Series* 68. British Archaeological Reports, £14.00.

¹³ *Yeavering. An Anglo-British Centre of early Northumbria. Department of Environment Archaeological Reports, 7*. By BRIAN HOPE-TAYLOR. HMSO, £33.00.

justifiably. *Yeavinger* brings many chapters of Bede's *Historia* to life.

If kings and archbishops with funny Sellar-and-Yeatman names used to dominate Anglo-Saxon and medieval history, as seen from the schoolroom, their physical settings have slowly climbed the league table in archaeology. *Yeavinger* was a royal palace. So was Cheddar, in the Somerset gorge and cheese belt; and another large report¹⁴ details its early palaces and churches. This is important. Ecclesiology still goes on, quietly, and many a Mr Simpkinson from Bath (not to say Mr Peters from Ramsgate, too) visits ruins and fanes with his fellows; in provincial France the hobby is even more popular. But church archaeology now bids fair to become a discipline on its own, and it begins with Middle and Late Saxon work, not Norman and Early English. Modern surveys of our greater churches, and we are getting excellent ones,¹⁵ place them in this context, and they do so with authority and sympathy. Those old departmental barriers are coming down. Not the least fascinating component of Wharham Percy is its deserted medieval church,

sitting upon layer after layer of detectable activity right back to a tiny Middle Saxon tabernacle.

THE EARLY 1980 BROUHAHA about the Vikings, centred on the British Museum's international exhibition, *The Vikings*, is notable for various things, not least the slightly surprising ambivalence of attitudes which has emerged. *The Times's* own puff featured some defensive headlines (TRADERS NOT RAIDERS, and NEW IMAGE FOR HARALD BLUETOOTH). The fact is that the British have long been ambivalent about the early Norsemen; in my own lifetime in very un-Viking Cornwall, "red-haired Dane" was a term of abuse. Ireland, which has a large Scandinavian element in its early medieval history, recently emerged as uncertainly pro-Viking over the Wood Quay affair—though there were deeper features here, such as the Dubliners' long-standing distrust of their city administration and the welcomed focus provided for the genuine, if late in the day, Irish conservationist movement. Because proper study of the Norse segment of Insular protohistory necessarily involves language (the place-names are central, not optional, here) and a very close acquaintanceship with advanced metalwork and numismatics, it

¹⁴ *The Saxon and Medieval Palaces at Cheddar. British Series 65.* By PHILIP RAHTZ. British Archaeological Reports, £10.

¹⁵ *Cathedrals and Abbeys of England and Wales.* By RICHARD MORRIS. J. M. Dent, £9.95.

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remains a minority interest. On the other hand, it is an adept, progressive and successful one.

The veritable harvest of literature timed to coincide with the Great Norse Road-Show includes the unusual as well as the obvious. Interest in Viking (or Anglo-Scandinavian) York goes back some years now¹⁶ and continues to be well served. Since most people's minds turn to those dramatic Viking ships, it is as well to point out that our own National Maritime Museum ("the last of the gentleman's museums") has dealt, superbly, since the 1970 discovery, with the Graveney Boat; an undecked 14-metre cargo boat to be placed alongside Roskilde. The report, truly a landmark of its kind,¹⁷ even includes detailed guidance for building a scale-model.

English-language background studies of the Scandinavians in the 1st millennium continue to appear,¹⁸ and should be much more widely used; the Vikings at home did not face quite the same world as they did in Britain and Ireland, and this is too often overlooked. Among the specific improvements that might be laid at their door, the iconographic and ornamental enrichment of that somewhat earlier North British tradition, the carved stone crosses and cross-pillars, ranks very high. It also happens to be an exceptionally tricky and complex subject, and it is rare that proper guidance, combining expertise, the ingenuity of a trained mind, and plain English, is laid before us; how nice, then, that *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England*,¹⁹ an outstanding instance of such a work, should also happen to appear now.

We can expect, correctly, to see most of the standard semi-popular accounts of Viking art and archaeology re-published in new editions.²⁰ David Wilson, the philo-Norse Director of the British Museum, has well judged the mood of a fact-hungry public who, as similar archaeological festivals in recent years very clearly demonstrated, will pay large sums for exhibition fees and sumptuous catalogues, and then still more for good, but clearly related, literature. It is entirely admirable that the chance to portray both Scandinavia and Britain/Ireland in their larger setting was seized, in the now-conventional format of collected

¹⁶ *Viking Age York and the North. Research Report No. 27.* Edited by R. A. HALL. Council for British Archaeology (122 Kennington Rd., London SE11 6RE), £6.00.

¹⁷ *The Graveney Boat. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, Archaeological Series No. 3. British Series 53.* Edited by VALERIE FENWICK. British Archaeological Reports, £9.00.

¹⁸ *The Viking Age in Denmark.* By KLAUS RANDBORG. Duckworth, £7.95.

¹⁹ *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England.* By RICHARD N. BAILEY. Collins, £10.95.

²⁰ *The Vikings and Their Origins.* By DAVID M. WILSON. New edition. Thames & Hudson, £3.95.

essays.²¹ On the other hand, personal statements are just as welcome, especially when they cover, with grace and originality,²² the whole Viking achievement; and this ranges as far as Newfoundland, whose Greenland-based Viking settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows is factual, and

totally removed from the lunatic world of Professor Barry Fell (perpetrator of *America B.C.*, etc.).

A long way still to go, perhaps, before "unified protohistory" is as obviously proper a field of study as the Plantagenets and Tudors. A very long way—because, below the work noticed here, there is a large and sometimes distressing infrastructure of popular distillations, aimed at our schools. The prospects are none the less distinctly brighter than they were in 1940, even in 1960. Protohistorians must soldier on. Most of them are, after all, volunteers rather than conscripts.

²¹ *The Northern World—the History and the Heritage of Northern Europe*. Edited by DAVID M. WILSON. Thames & Hudson, £15.00.

²² *The Viking World*. By JAMES GRAHAM-CAMPBELL. Frances Lincoln/Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £11.95.

Beside the Lake

Why do my poems bicker
and dissolve, their clear reflection
melting to a shine, a gloss
on darkness or the vacant
glitter of unnecessary words?

*

They ripple by the light of
something I still fail to say
and fix no meaning, will not shape
themselves beyond the waste
which lolls here speechless. No. . . .

*

Patience is art's conclusive point,
the end of irony. I cast
these words on water, random
sparklers, innocent of language
or the slow, unfathomable time it takes.

*

A poem comes up gasping
for the world, is offered
nothing but my mind's confection
and returns appalled
by such appeasement.

*

I have become this cold
attenuated surface in the tension
of its distance, in its infinitely
tight horizon, in its fluent
passing over of the main concern.

*

Let there be one voice only
to attend to, sounding out the depths
I fear to enter, and whose language
is that necessary love which breaks the water
in a spray of light.

John Mole

PRESS

A German Correspondent Reports from London

From the Land of "Fish-&-Ships"—By MARTIN ESSLIN



THE *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*—affectionately known as *die FAZ*—has always aspired to the mantle of a German *Times* or *Zürcher Zeitung*. It is a quality paper of quality papers, staid, soberly laid out, thorough in its coverage, and supported by a large corps of correspondents. It even maintains a special *Kulturkorrespondent* in London to keep it up-to-date with regular analytical essays on the depressing, if colourful, spectacle of the convulsions and dramatic agonies of “the sick man of Europe.” This cultural correspondent, who has been in London since 1974, has now collected his articles in a handsomely produced volume entitled *Ein bisschen Lust am Untergang: Englische Ansichten*.¹ Herr Karl-Heinz Bohrer (a rather unfortunate name for a Teuton living in London!) has chosen a nicely ambiguous title, which is not easy to translate: it might best be rendered as “A little (erotic) pleasure in one’s own downfall. . . . Pictures (or views) from England.” There is no suggestion here of mere decline (*Niedergang*). What we are concerned with is the *fall* (*Untergang*) of the British, with appropriate echoes of Gibbon, Spengler, and Sieburg. The picture on the dust-cover is a reproduction of Ford Madox Brown’s *The Last of England*—another subtle allusion?

Well, England or Britain (Herr Bohrer does not seem to make a clear distinction between these terms) *is* in decline. It *is* the sick man of Europe. But the author has nothing very new or enlightening to say on the subject. If his book deserves mention, it is as a symptom of the difficulties of genuine understanding among the nations of contemporary Europe (even two countries so close geographically, so intimately linked culturally, as Britain

and West Germany); and as a symptom of certain aspects of the present intellectual situation in Germany.

Take, for a start, the old assumption that I too always entertained—that the British press could never print foreign names without the most ludicrous mis-spellings (after all, knowing the languages of the “wogs” who “start at Calais” was never a prestigious matter. The Germans, on the other hand, were wide open to foreign culture, prided themselves on knowing foreign languages, and spelt English words with admirable accuracy. This book disillusioned us. It teems with mis-spellings of English words and names: Mrs Thatcher is christened *Margret* throughout; the British diet is a monotonous succession of *fish-and-ships* (p. 113); the Notting Hill Carnival causes ecstasy and riots between *Kensington Parc Road* and *Westborne Parc* (p. 175). The “famous historian” A. J. P. Taylor is not sufficiently famous to escape being called *A. P. Tailor* (p. 24); whether he has any connection with the building firm of *Taylor & Woodrom* (p. 26) is not, however, made clear. Nor is it clear whether all these and many more mis-spellings are the hasty work of the printers of the *FAZ*, scrupulously reproduced by the typesetters of the book (proof-read by the author?).

So much for the myth of German accuracy. What of the assumption of superior editorial skill? The book puts paid to that as well. The articles, some of which date from casual visits to England in 1968 and 1969, are printed helter-skelter without any chronological order or indication of their date (except for a brief list of “sources” at the end), so that it is impossible to tell which portions of the information contained in what were, after all, ephemeral newspaper reports are still valid. On one page the British Prime Minister is called Wilson, on another Thatcher, on a third Callaghan; President Ford reigns in Washington; the National Front caused the first violent riots in South London “two weeks ago.” These confusions are obvious; but what of less easily checkable facts, such as the assertion that the British steel industry has

¹ *Ein bisschen Lust am Untergang: Englische Ansichten*. By KARL-HEINZ BOHRER. Carl Hanser Verlag (Munich), DM 19.80.

"recently" been brought back into private ownership, or that the "current" rate of inflation is above 20%? What is the German reader to make of this jumble of undated and uncorrected "facts", thrown at him in a volume bound in hard covers and obviously intended as a source of enlightenment about the current situation in "England"?

CRITICISM OF A BOOK on these lines is, of course, little more than niggling pedantry. I venture it here merely to delineate the process by which at least one reader's confidence in the substance of the book was gradually undermined as he read on, becoming more and more fascinated by the symptomatic nature of what clearly was a very badly put-together compilation, and by the growing number of indications that the "*Herr Kulturkorrespondent*" was none too familiar with the "*Kultur*" he was supposed to correspond about.

Had Aldous Huxley really warned us of a future "new brave world" (p. 20)? Was the Younger Pitt's great Parliamentary antagonist during the Napoleonic Wars really called *John Fox* (p. 217)? Had *The Guardian* really left Manchester and been replaced by a "new newspaper" called *Manchester Evening News* as is clearly implied on p. 25 (although on p. 194 it is still in Manchester and threatened by the lack of profitability of its main source of income, the *Manchester News*)? Had Southern Ireland really achieved full independence only in 1949 (p. 44)? How strange then, that Eire had enough independence to stay out of World War II...!

THESE MAY BE pedantic niggles, but they get us closer to the real objection to such a book—the depressing essence of its symptomatic nature. Can true insights, illuminating and incisive journalism, be based on such rickety foundations? After all, a foreign observer steeped in the background, the language, and the culture of the country he is reporting on could indeed bring invaluable illumination simply through the distance and detachment of an outsider. Lichtenberg's letters from London in the 18th century, Fontane's reports to the *Vossische Zeitung* in the 1850s are classical instances of such reporting in the past. It is a paradox of the proliferating mass communication of our own times that such enlightenment has become so rare and difficult. The mass of information in the media, the haste with which it is prepared, and the casualness with which it is consumed seem to me one aspect of this problem. The other is the notorious levelling-down of education: Lichtenberg, Fontane, the great foreign correspondents of *The Times* or *Morning Post* in the last century—all were members of the

privileged élite of truly well-educated persons. In those days you could hardly call yourself educated if you did not speak French, German, Italian; if you had not read the classics in Greek and Latin; if, above all, you had not absorbed, through a classical education, habits of accuracy, logical reasoning, and scholarly method (which, at least, involved looking up Charles James Fox in an encyclopaedia if one was uncertain about his Christian names).

Inevitably nowadays, fewer and fewer people with this training are found among journalists and media reporters (though luckily there are still some). What we now get—and Britain is no better-off than Germany or the United States, France or Italy—are ambitious semi-professionals who are sent abroad with perhaps a smattering of the local language, but even if they stay for years cannot absorb the local culture. Their intellectual isolation is too great and self-perpetuating, the *idées fixes* with which they came remain unshaken, and their implicit assumptions are never re-examined.

Hoary cliché coexists, in an almost schizophrenic symbiosis, with simple observation. On pp. 47–48 Bohrer accurately reports that any British withdrawal from Northern Ireland would lead to a blood-bath; but in his introductory survey he still speaks of Northern Ireland as "England's last colony." This is a cliché widespread in Germany but grotesque in the light of another implicitly held assumption: that the British Empire possessed colonies for the purpose of maintaining "an economy based on an economic *diktat*" (p. 16). The picture which emerges is of a Northern Ireland savagely exploited by "England" for economic gain, and consequently retained in colonial bondage. Whether the British Empire was based on the ruthless exploitation of colonies through a *diktat* seems to me at least debatable. There is a characteristic lack of historical perspective here. At one period—during the rule of the East India Company for example, or perhaps even in Colonial America—there may well have been such a *diktat*; but at other times the Empire was a vast free-trade area, and surely the reaction of New Zealand and Australia to British entry to the EEC suggests that some of the "exploited" members felt they were profiting from it. Be that as it may, the matter is surely worth discussion and investigation, rather than unashamed plagiarism from some political dictionary of *idées reçues*.

HERE WE ARE GETTING to the substance of such a book: the symptoms are a very shaky knowledge of the matters under consideration, and a wholly unjustified eagerness to draw pretentious, pseudo-sociological, pseudo-profound conclusions from an imperfect comprehension of basic facts. A

good case in point is provided by an article (first published in October 1977) headed "The Spectre of Collectivism", dealing with Paul Johnson's criticisms of the Labour Party at that time. The burden of this article is that Paul Johnson, a typical representative of upper-class intellectual élites, was naive in recognising so late in the day what the Labour Party was all about.

"Alas, however, Paul Johnson is too naive politically and too undisciplined intellectually to recognise in Popper's thesis [the incompatibility of freedom and collectivism] the inner contradiction, unresolved to this day, of socialism itself. Rather this former Left radical—or should one say radical Conservative?—involves his former friends in an emotional sham-battle by confronting his Left ideals—or what he regards as such—with what he takes to be the perversion of these ideals: the authoritarian power of the unions, their "collectivist" philosophy, which he feels is identical with the corporatist ideas of a fascist state. . . ." (pp. 102–103)

All this because the former Editor of the Left-wing *New Statesman*

"... obviously had never understood what the Labour movement was all about from its beginnings: namely, social justice and freedom in a system under egalitarian control, not the individual freedom of privileged individuals or of a privileged social stratum.

Indeed Johnson, and with him all so-called Left critics of socialism, above all those new Parisian philosophers, draw up false battle-lines, if they are now discovering, polemically, the collectivist elements in Marxism. . . ." (p. 103)

Alas, poor Bohrer! Whatever one may think about Paul Johnson and his flight from the Left, this pretentious and patronising diatribe is based on its author's simple ignorance of the fact that the British Labour Party did not spring from Marxist roots. The philosophy of the British trade unions has its origins in religious and social ideas which are very far from Marxism, much nearer to a quest for individual freedom (the right to free assembly, free bargaining).

Bohrer appears to be unaware of the historical background. He believes, like most Germans, that Marxism, Trade-unionism, and Socialism are everywhere synonymous. Thus he misses the very point that an observer of the hard-pressed Labour Party should start from: that, for the first time, Marxist ideas are attempting to enter—or infiltrate—the Labour Party structure. German intellectuals nowadays like to feel comfortably at home within a Marxist "framework", but a cursory acquaintance with Marx's and Engels' writings would have shown our *Kulturkorrespondent* that they were thoroughly disgusted with the British

Labour Movement precisely because it proved to be so immune to their ideas.

Bohrer misses another essential point about Paul Johnson: his Roman Catholicism. In Germany, Catholicism is equated with Right-wing positions; in Britain, where Catholics were excluded from public office well into the 19th century, religious dissent, an anti-Establishment attitude, and the search for individual freedom have often pushed Catholics into the Labour camp. Reiterating the stale preconceptions with which he crossed the Channel, the *Kulturkorrespondent* pontificates:

"It now becomes clear that the great romance of this influential intellectual, of good family and with an exquisite education, simply doesn't work out, that a pro-socialist England has learned to get along without the eccentric aspirations of these fastidious people, that between the solipsistic fantasies of Johnson and his London and Paris friends on the one hand, and the requirements and ideas of simple trade-unionists, miners, and car-workers on the other there lies a world of incomprehension. Paul Johnson's raging disappointment over his misdirected romanticism now boils over in an aggressive, anti-social rhetoric which it would be a wild understatement to call splenetic Toryism." (p. 104)

I am at a loss to decide which is greater here: ignorance or arrogance. On top of which there is also a cross-Channel irony. These pseudo-Marxist musings, based as they are on the assumption that a desire for individual freedom is wholly incompatible with social justice, spring from the pen of a West German journalist in whose own country the ruling Social Democratic Party has indeed moved away from Marxism—following the British and Scandinavian examples—to advocate (quite successfully, it seems to me) a working system combining freedom with a considerable degree of social and economic justice. But the current German penchant for "*Theorie*" cannot stand very much reality.

CONSIDER YET ANOTHER example. What—if one took a poll—would turn out to be the hoariest cliché about modern Britain? I am prepared to wager that it might well be the idea that in England the sinister power manipulating all of our lives is the dreaded "British Secret Service." We can thank "James Bond" and John le Carré for the propagation of this myth, and how could our *Kulturkorrespondent* fail to fall for it? In an article remarkable for the extent of non-knowledge displayed in its account of "The BBC, Myth & Reality", Bohrer has this fantasy in handy reserve. After pointing out that the BBC has established a

reputation with such splendid international successes as *Eton Place* (original title *Upstairs Downstairs*)—which in fact is a product of ITV's commercial television—he goes on to reveal that “it is beyond question that, since the pioneer days of Reith, the BBC has quite naturally embodied the values of the English upper and upper-middle class” (p. 67). With impeccable logic he then points out that the drama department of this establishment-minded BBC-TV has been broadcasting a succession of radical and Left-wing plays:

“The brilliantly handled new style, mixing fiction and documentary, provoked the reproach that manipulation from the extreme Left was involved. The controversy about *Days of Hope* sprang from a generally spreading suspicion on the part of the Conservatives about the BBC drama department. *Days of Hope* was merely the latest instance in a series of ‘Left’ TV plays, such as *Leeds United* and *Brimstone and Treacle* and *Cathy Come Home*. Speculations that the English Secret Service was exercising pressure on the choice of plays are by no means inappropriate, if one ponders the fact that a number of playwrights working for the BBC, together with other British artists, belong to the anarchist-revolutionary party which has been much in the public eye through the activities of the actors Vanessa and Corin Redgrave.” (p. 67)

Here we have a splendid example of certain journalistic standards and methods. If the “English” Secret Service is really as sinister as here portrayed, why is no instance quoted of any political TV play actually being withdrawn (as in fact one or two have been)? Why is the only one cited as withdrawn—*Brimstone and Treacle*—precisely the one that was withdrawn for “reasons of taste” (questionable though those may have been), because it showed the rape of a half-witted girl? And how can the fact that all these “anarcho-revolutionary” plays were in fact programmed and broadcast be squared with the BBC's sinister Establishment line and the even more sinister pressures of the British Secret Service? For a quality European newspaper, moderate in tone, conservative in tendency, prudent in temperament, to print such a farrago of nonsense and unfounded innuendo is shocking enough; to have it reprinted in hard covers two years later, when there has been time to check facts and find out what really happened, is quite grotesque.

EVEN MORE DUBIOUS than the writer's obvious failure to ascertain simple facts is his tendency to use his impressions as a launch-pad for daring sociological speculation. This is a thought-form highly characteristic of present-day West Germany, where the “Frankfurt School” of social

thinkers (they were among the most prominent émigrés who returned to Germany after the War, and quickly filled an intellectual vacuum) still exercises an important influence on students and young intellectuals. T. W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Walter Benjamin (their friend and colleague who perished in 1940 and who became something of a “cult figure”) were brilliant, if obscure theoreticians. Benjamin once wrote a splendid study of 19th-century Paris. But Bohrer is no Benjamin as he attempts to probe the depths of London. In an article which takes off from Oscar Wilde's home in Tite Street and tries to link Wilde's downfall with the sinister lure of luxury hotels (a symbol of the new anonymity of vice in a money-mad capitalistic society), Bohrer is gradually carried away into more and more audacious notions about the dark satanic qualities of 19th-century London:

“There are a number of famous attempts to describe this dangerous and, in contrast to Paris, totally irregular [*ganz und gar irreguläre*] London, that London which terrified Dostoevsky as ‘the modern Babylon’: Paul Féval's *Mystères de Londres* (1840), Charles Dickens' several famous descriptions such as *Two Cities*, *London Sketches* and *Oliver Twist*, down to Gustave Doré's drawings of Wilde's glittering epoch. . . .” (pp. 98–99)

Well, well. Was that London of the 1840s so totally different from Paris in its “irregularity” (whatever that may mean)? Has Bohrer never read Eugène Sue's novel *Les Mystères de Paris* (which describes the Paris of the 1830s and '40s as a warren of impenetrable thieves' kitchens) or Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (which does likewise)? As for Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, it is necessarily a description of London and Paris in the 18th century, dealing as it does with the period of the French Revolution. *London Sketches* (which presumably stands for *Sketches by Boz*) deals with anything but such a teeming underground London, and thus *Oliver Twist* remains the only example among those that Bohrer cites. Doré died in 1883;

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his London drawings depict a much earlier period than Wilde's glittering years. In this one short passage there is a multitude of factual inaccuracies, and some evidence that the books Bohrer cites have not really been looked into. And all this leads the would-be Benjamin to his bold sociological conclusion:

"Crime is the logical polarisation (if we think this idea through to its final consequences) of the imperilled beautiful life in the gardens of Chelsea. . . .

Chelsea's aestheticism, which Dante Gabriel Rossetti invented and Oscar Wilde carried to its culmination, has a special relationship with crime, if, with special regard to Wilde, one recognises something roughly on the following lines: crime is the extreme contrast to the cult of the beautiful as it was practised in Chelsea. This cult of beauty, still visible today in its consequences, is the consciously, polemically provoked opposite to the social and moral pauperisation of the masses in London's East End, of which crime in turn was merely a symptom. . . . It does not amount to cynicism to say that the city's capital crimes were the price paid for those civil liberties which, in contrast to Germany's police states, had been fostered since the 18th century to the point of getting out of hand. The most visible expression of all this? The utterly rudimentary policing of the town of London. Oscar Wilde's anarchic attitudes were the final consequences of an idea of civil liberty which the bourgeoisie of that time no longer wanted to tolerate. . . ."

(pp. 99–100)

And so on, and on, and on. Quite apart from the factual errors—London had a rather good police service by the 1890s; the thieves' kitchens of *Oliver Twist* no longer existed; Wilde was a socialist and there was a close connection between the aesthetes of his circle and movements for social reform (the Fabians, Shaw)—the implication here is diabolical: to get rid of crime altogether, might it not have been better to have a German-style police state? And what evidence has Bohrer for his assertion that more crime existed in London at that time than in Germany? The impression of so many murders probably arose from the fact that there was more and better reporting of murders in a country with a burgeoning popular press than elsewhere. All in all, the situation in the 1830s and '40s in London and Paris was vastly different from that of the 1880s and '90s; but what is half-a-century among friendly social thinkers? In the earlier period the chaotic nature of the few really great metropolitan areas in Europe—Paris, London—basically resulted from the Industrial Revolution; by the end of the century much had been done to improve sanitation, housing etc. Bohrer goes on to equate the British pre-occupation with crime (and the popularity of the

crime novel) with a preponderance of actual murder cases. He ignores what has been written on the subject: in general, the popularity of the detective genre in England has been seen as stemming from certain literary and ideological traditions in the culture, rather than from a proliferation of mayhem.

YET THERE IS ONE positive thing to be said: the *Kulturkorrespondent* is aware, however dimly, of his peculiar situation as a would-be observer in an environment difficult to penetrate and even more difficult to understand. One section of the book, eight articles in all, is devoted to the subject of "European Decadence and Ourselves" (i.e. the Germans). Why are the Germans so isolated in our decadent West? Why do they give to the outside world the impression of what Bohrer calls *Gesichtslosigkeit*—facelessness?

"The discussion about its own decline which has broken out throughout the Western world also reveals the Achilles heel of the Germans, who are seemingly so healthy, eternally sound, and who do not take part in this process of decay: that is, in discussions of the psychological and cultural structures of [Western] Europe their existence is almost imperceptible.

For to speak of the decline of the West also implies talking of the Germans' loss of face [i.e. individuality, definable character]: to the same degree that the economic and political symptoms of decline accumulate in the West, West Germany's isolation from the psychological-intellectual context of her neighbours becomes more apparent. . . ."

(pp. 121–122)

Are we, then, to believe that because of its economic strength the West Germany of the Baader-Meinhof gang, of alienated intellectuals and continual spy scares, is a picture of flourishing health (despite its truncated nationhood, divided by a wall, deprived of a true capital and centre)? Bohrer assumes that it all has something to do with Germany's loss of an historical dimension—with the provincialism and academicism of German intellectual life—with German humourlessness and an ideal of masculinity wedded to efficiency rather than charm—with the lack of a tradition of "dandyism."

"The reason for yet another unprepossessing image of the West Germans does not lie in envy or hatred. The truth is that in this phenomenon a more basic role is played, on the non-political, non-diplomatic plane, by the opposite of envy, namely a kind of feeling of superiority. This may sound cynical. But the German lack of cynicism might be a first distinctive characteristic. In the light of symptoms of West European decadence the inhabitants of the Federal Republic once

more are seen as strange Europeans, who alone do not participate in the charm of a sinking bourgeoisie or an anarchically self-conscious working class—'workaholics' who alone do not know the attractions of decline, petty-bourgeois on the map grid of morality (*Kleinbürgerliches im moralischen Planquadrat*). . . ." (p. 124)

There is some truth in all this (whatever the meaning of that high-faluting final formulation). The irony lies in the fact that the *Kulturkorrespondent* and his regular newspaper probes supply, or so it seems to me, a good deal of the answer to the question that puzzles him. He says of the West:

"This decadence, however, is neither something merely negative, nor is it so new. It is, and was, the open, scintillating symptom of Western civilisation, which had already become a truism in the 1930s, when the National-Socialist and Soviet leaders began to mock Western democrats as decadent, when the emphatically civilised deportment of British and French diplomats appeared ridiculous and weak even to those Germans who were not supporters of the Nazis and had no pseudo-heroic aspirations. . . ." (p. 112)

In other words: if decadence is synonymous with civilisation, perhaps it is not quite as decadent as it might seem? What appears, to an impressionable observer, to be decadence is simply the complexity of more intricate civilisations—that very complexity which in present-day Britain so baffles and defeats Herr Bohrer. It is a complexity that springs from enduring traditions (such as those of the Labour Party), a culture based on a multitude of unspoken and unexpressed assumptions which form the firm basis of a tacit consensus, an emotional and cultural *atmosphere* rather than a *Weltanschauung* that can be reduced to a few simple vulgar-Marxist formulae.

Where are the roots of this loss of historical dimension? Again Bohrer unwittingly supplies the answer. In discussing the supposed reasons for Germany's isolation, he sets out from the following position:

"Above all: let us dismiss for a while this pattern, always so readily available, of the envy of those who cannot bear our efficiency. Let us simply forget Harold Wilson's recent press conference, in which, while attempting to put the present British mess in perspective, he declared that the

Germans owe their present economic power to British wartime bombs and American postwar aid. Let us also forget the reproach of Nazism." (p. 123)

Why, in assessing the present intellectual "facelessness" of the Federal Republic should the mention of Nazism be dismissed out of hand, as of almost axiomatic irrelevance? Nazism as a political phenomenon may be a thing of the past. But the cultural and intellectual consequences of Nazism are very much with us in the Federal Republic (and in the *GDR* as well)—in the decline of intellectual standards in the wake of the destruction of the educational system, of the press, the theatre, the literature of the Weimar Republic; quite apart from the terrible and long-lasting effects of Hitler's War—the mass displacement of the population, the uprooting of whole social strata, the moral and social effects of the corruption of that era, followed by the black-marketeering of the post-War era, which have led to a certain Balkanisation of German life-styles and standards.

It is this profound upheaval which has made West Germany the area of Europe most susceptible to a thoroughgoing "Americanisation", and turned it into a country which culturally seems to start out *tabula rasa* from year zero. Hence its loss of historical dimension, and hence the naivety which Bohrer so rightly diagnoses, and of which he is so striking an example.

Far be it from me to argue the relative state of decline of German and British society. For what this particular collection of newspaper articles shows is the really tragic difficulty of genuine communication between national cultures that have already moved so far apart.

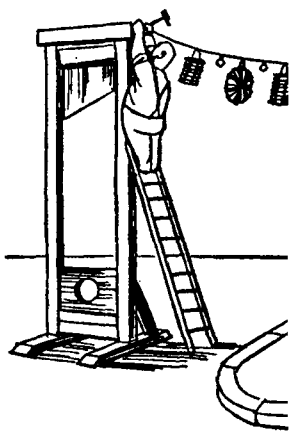
A great many of Bohrer's dispatches to the *FAZ* were devoted to heart-searchings like those on the reasons for the continued popularity of Wartime adventures on British television, with the Germans as ubiquitous villains. There is a quite touching little description about having to take part in London street celebrations during the Queen's Jubilee, and his puzzlement at the reactions of the locals at having a German among them on this occasion. Again and again what is communicated in these pieces is really his isolation, his incomprehension, his perplexity at being unable to penetrate to the true core of what he has experienced. But should not that have been conducive to a certain humility, an eagerness to learn, a readiness to find out?

CONFERENCE

1789 & All That

French Marxists vs. the "Anglo-Saxons"

By Norman Hampson



THE CITY COUN-
CILLORS of early
19th-century Bam-
berg would no doubt
have been somewhat
bemused at the
thought that a con-
ference of historians
of the French Revolu-
tion would one day
meet in their graceful
Rokokosaal. Their
somewhat com-
placent portraits
seem to belong to a
world where nothing
could change very

much or very fast. If all those invited had been able to attend, the audience would have included most of the specialists on the history of the Revolution from Europe and America. As it was, a score or so turned up to discuss—in theory—whether the French Revolution was “inevitable” or “accidental.” In practice, most of the contributors presented specialist papers (some of them very good ones) on different aspects of 18th-century French society, and those who engaged each other in argument talked about whether or not the Revolution was connected with the famous “rise of the *bourgeoisie*” (despite Suratteau’s optimistic assertion that that bone had been gnawed for twenty-five years until there was not much meat left on it). The outcome was rather less predictable than might have been expected.

Such West German newspapers as reported the proceedings tended to present them as a confrontation between French Marxists and “Anglo-Saxon” pragmatists. There is something in this—those who claimed to be Marxists *were* French—but things were rather more complicated than that. If there was a battle, it was rather like one of the less conclusive 18th-century naval engagements in which

the two fleets passed each other on opposite tacks. There was an occasional exchange of fire between a couple of adjacent ships: Clive Church took issue with Roland Mousnier (whom illness had detained in France) on the question of whether the “bureaucratisation of the civil service” owed more to the *ancien régime* or to the Revolution; and there was a more acrimonious encounter between R. R. Palmer and Albert Soboul. On the whole, however, the two fleets kept a respectable distance from each other and there was certainly no grappling and boarding. This was partly due to the organisation of the conference, which prevented any sustained dialogue between a speaker and his critics. The latter posed their objections, one after the other, with the speaker replying *en bloc*—this allowed all of us as much scope as we chose for the statesmanlike evasion of awkward questions.

THE FIRST SPOKESMAN for the non-Marxists was R. R. Palmer, who appealed to his Marxist critics not to reject his thesis of “an Atlantic revolution” as necessarily incompatible with their own beliefs.¹ He quoted Markov and Kossok (the latter was present at Bamberg, but did not present a paper) as arguing that the “Atlanticists” were trying to place the American and French Revolutions within a liberal tradition that culminated in political democracy, rather than within the context of a class struggle that made them (or at least the French Revolution) the fore-runners of 1917. Palmer showed that his own views were formed long before the outbreak of the Cold War, and rather wickedly pointed out that they seem to have been shared by Marx. He was prepared to concede that the two definitions of democracy—political and social—were equally acceptable, and he saw no reason why belief in the existence of an “Atlantic revolution” in the 18th century should imply anything in particular about the 20th. He was prepared to accept the French Revolution as “*bourgeois*”, provided that the term was understood as referring in a general way to the middle classes and not to any particular group, defined specifically in relationship to its “ownership of the means of production.”

Albert Soboul would have none of this olive branch. Legitimately determined not to conceal genuine disagreement beneath an exchange of mutual compliments, he insisted that the “Atlantic” thesis was a product of the Cold War. His own paper was to suggest a very French suspicion that talk of an Atlantic revolution was a none-too-subtle way of denying the unique importance of *la Révolution notre mère*. He was probably right to believe that, at bottom, no compromise was possible between those who thought in terms of an 18th-century phenomenon that was mainly concerned with “liberty” and those for whom the

¹ See: R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, 2 vols. (1959, 1964).

French Revolution derived its meaning from the fact that it was a giant step forward on the road towards "socialism." American liberalism and European Marxism could not mix.

IN ONE RESPECT at least, G. V. Taylor² agreed with Soboul: a dislike of synthetic olive branches. He was cleared for action and had his boarding parties at the ready. It was typical of the irony that presided over Bamberg that R. R. Palmer should have been able to quote Marx in his own defence and that Taylor alone insisted on defining "*bourgeoisie*" as derived from its relationship to the "ownership of the means of production." For him, the *bourgeois* was essentially the merchant. Taylor showed very convincingly that French merchants were on the whole hostile to the Enlightenment (especially where the colonies and the slave trade were concerned) and suspicious of any economic initiative by the state. They showed no special interest in what should have been "their" revolution; they took little part in it, and most of them suffered as a consequence of it. He called for the kind of approach to the study of the Revolution that one would have expected to appeal to the Marxists: the quantitative examination of social attitudes, and a precise use of economic criteria when talking about "social classes." Having gone out to challenge the Marxists on their own ground, he was inclined to resent the fact that they had abandoned what he thought their positions should have been, and were fighting somewhere else.

Taylor went on to put forward a positive interpretation of the Revolution as "a revolt of the wealthy", which the government would probably have suppressed if the economic crisis of 1789 (and the consequent food riots) had not given everyone the false impression that the rebellious minority enjoyed mass support. This was revisionism with a vengeance and the case, in its extreme form, may be difficult to sustain. George Rudé's argument that the Paris crowd showed a high degree of political consciousness in the spring of 1789 was not very convincing; but the coincidence of the Parisian insurrection with the dismissal of Necker was unlikely to have been purely coincidental. Peasant cahiers may not have said very much about seigneurial dues, but the widespread assault on manorial rolls in July was something new. Taylor was no doubt trailing his coat—since his paper was presented in the final session it did not receive the attention it deserved—and he could concede a more positive political role to the popular revolts of

1789 without weakening his basic argument that the Revolution was a political crisis whose unpredictable evolution forced all the participants into political stances that were dictated by the events themselves.

MY OWN CONTRIBUTION consisted of two assertions, the first of which was at variance with part of Taylor's argument. There did seem to me to have been a revolutionary ideology before 1789; but it was a Rousseauist one, wholly concerned with the moral regeneration of the nation, sympathetic to the poor, but reactionary in its economic attitudes. The more radical policies of the Terror were not "steps towards socialism" and were only partially concessions to *sansculotte* pressure; some of them were attempts to build a New Jerusalem for which the architect's drawings had been made before 1789. Secondly, I suggested that many of the revolutionary leaders (notably Brissot, Marat, Danton and Hébert) were professional politicians as the word is understood nowadays, who mostly shared a common Rousseauist ideology but were more immediately concerned with questions of political tactics and the pursuit of power. The conflicts between Girondins and Montagnards—and, later, between Dantonists and Hébertists—were therefore in no sense "class conflicts", but a competition for power amongst men of similar views.

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² See G. V. Taylor, "Non-capitalist wealth and the origins of the French Revolution" *American Historical Review* (1967).

These heresies provoked less opposition than I had expected, probably because they appeared somewhat marginal to the Great Debate. Mazauric, while agreeing with me—*pace* Soboul—that there was no class conflict between Girondins and Montagnards, suggested that I was not doing justice to “the scope of the Revolution”, which was fair comment as regards the impact of events, if not the motives of the men with whom I was dealing. Soboul, I suspect, was quite happy to abandon Girondins, Dantonists, and Hébertists so long as no one suggested that Robespierre behaved like a *politician*! I heard him say to his neighbour that Danton was “never a revolutionary”; it had rather an Orwellian ring about it. No one bothered to express any views about the Rousseauist ideology.

THE “MARXIST” CASE was represented by Claude Mazauric and Albert Soboul, in the sense that both proclaimed their allegiance to Marx and theirs were the only papers to attempt a re-definition, in Marxist terms, of the general significance of the Revolution. One could perhaps say that Mazauric took the hand that Palmer had held out to Soboul. More than any of the other French historians, he showed himself familiar with the work of the “Anglo-Saxons”, and disposed to take it or leave it on its merits, rather than to segregate the sheep from the Cobbanite goats. He also had some not unkind things to say about the work of François Furet. He began, in very “Anglo-Saxon” style, by warning us of the danger of “definitions” and “concepts” and calling for a discussion based on “empirical findings” and “unquestionable erudition.”

When Mazauric claimed that “the *bourgeoisie*” was the main beneficiary of the Revolution, it was clear that he was thinking of wealthy commoners in general, most of them owners of what had been defined as “proprietary wealth”, and therefore excluded from the *bourgeoisie* proper, i.e. the merchants. The success of the *bourgeoisie* consisted in the fact that it saw “most of the values characteristic of its mental, cultural and ideological world become the accepted values of a society dominated in general by respect for property . . .”



Chaval

This was moving a very long way from any kind of crude economic determinism. Mazauric went on to agree that there was no mechanical correlation between social class and political attitude, that the revolutionary notables enjoyed a “social consensus”, and that the acceptance of Jacobinism by many of them was due to their “greater or lesser consciousness of a shared national interest or particular needs.” Some of those present thought this was stretching materialism very far indeed; and Mazauric was accused of being an “idealist”, especially when, in discussion, he defined the *bourgeois* as a man who thought in a particular way, even if he happened to be a noble or a wealthy peasant! He perhaps saved himself by claiming a central position within the *bourgeoisie* for “the representatives of merchant and industrial capitalism”, who were then reinforced by their class allies. Mazauric went on to say that the Revolution was responsible for “the decisive transformation of the debris of the former dominant groups” (nobles of various kinds, merchants, members of the professional classes, etc.) into a new and more or less homogeneous collection of notables. The society that emerged from the Revolution can, therefore, reveal virtually nothing of the social tensions that contributed to its outbreak. The ideology changed too, under the impact of events. It was transformed from an open and progressive attitude in 1789 to a closed and hierarchical one, concerned above all with material interest and the state. Once again, Mazauric introduced what some might consider to be a materialist fig-leaf by relating this change of ideology to “the destruction of merchant capitalism.”

In other words, he lived up to his own call for freedom from dogmatism. The influence of Gramsci was clearly evident in his flexibility and his readiness to accept the—almost—autonomous role of events and ideas in determining the course of history. By his insistence on the primacy of *values* rather than of *interests*, and on the transformation of both by what happened during the Revolution, he shared a good deal of common ground with G. V. Taylor. They were not in conflict about the “how” and the “what”; and the “why” by which Mazauric ultimately rescued his determinism might appear to others to have a rather detachable look about it.

IN THE END it was left to Albert Soboul to defend what he himself described as the “classical” interpretation of the Revolution. Like Mazauric, he chose to talk about “principles” rather than class structure. He began by claiming that the principles of the Revolution, as revealed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, were relative to their specific historical context and to the economic interests of a particular class, though their advocates believed

them to be timeless and universal. They were based on the autonomy of the individual and the sanctity of contracts. This is to forget all about Rousseau. The man who said that the legislator should transform men into what he needed them to be (a sentiment later echoed by Saint-Just) had a rather curious view of the autonomy of the individual. For Soboul, this ideology emerged with the Levellers, in their fight against "the coalition of the City and the Gentry." John Locke redefined it in a more conservative way that corresponded to the interests of the "upper middle class" which attained power in 1688. (The great Whig oligarchs might have been surprised to learn that!) By the time of Jefferson and the American Revolution, it had been further watered down until, apparently once again, it "corresponded to the interests of the ruling class." This is at least relatively consistent even if it does not correspond to what everyone would regard as the hard facts.

There followed some rather tricky footwork. The men of 1789 gave to this class ideology a universal character far transcending "the empirical character of English liberties and the contradictions of the American Declarations." This argument was necessary in order to allow Soboul to say that the principles had somehow acquired legitimacy—and to present Robespierre as the one man who remained true to them when "the *bourgeoisie constituante* adapted the theory of rights to the interests of the ruling class." In this context, he quoted Robespierre's "*Périssent les colonies plutôt qu'un principe!*" (but made no reference to his accusation, somewhat later, that Danton had had slavery abolished without thinking of its effects on the colonies).

The development of the Revolution then led to a situation in which the strict adherence to the "principles of 1789" was likely to lead to the overthrow of the revolutionaries. This will scarcely be stop-press news to any politician who has ever found that circumstances prevented him from implementing the promises of his electoral manifesto. Robespierre did (as Soboul argued) have an unusually clear understanding of the conflict between expediency and principle. Not without some inner torment, he satisfied himself that it was

legitimate, by means of the Terror, to suspend the normal working of the Constitution in order to save the Republic. He saw this as an unfortunate temporary necessity, rather than as some alternative principle; but Soboul had to take the latter view, in order both to separate Robespierre from the many who shared his attitude and to assert that Robespierre's solution was based on an "implicit" class analysis by the one man who knew how to "*appréhender le devenir historique sans renoncer à la normativité des principes.*"

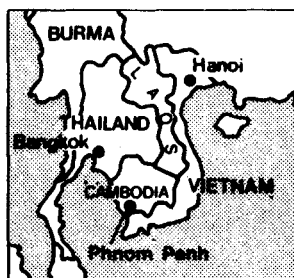
Ah qu'en termes galants ces choses sont mises! Thus all the circles are squared. Robespierre alone (unless one allows Saint-Just in too) was able to go beyond Palmer's "democratic revolution" and, without betraying any of *those* principles, reconcile them with the class war that forms the basis of the true ultimate revolution. No doubt it would be very difficult indeed to produce much evidence for Robespierre's having *actually* said so; but, then, almost anything can be "implicit" in almost anything else.

THERE WAS A GOOD DEAL more to Bamberg than this, but I have described what was, for me, the central debate. Listening to the arguments in the *Rokokosaal*, it was difficult to resist a feeling of the unreality of it all. Was this what the French Revolution had actually been like, and would any of its participants have recognised their roles in the parts we had been assigning to them? Whereas a good deal of the debate on the English Revolution seems—at least to an outsider—to be concerned with Who did What, the emphasis here was generally on the significance of events in terms that the actors themselves would not have recognised. Soboul, in a vigorous passage on the power of words to provoke men to action and to self-sacrifice, was one of the very few who, for a moment, seemed to make some contact with the shouting, the hysteria, the idealism, and the cruelty. Whatever "*bourgeois*" really meant in 1789, it seemed to at least one of the participants that we were a very *bourgeois* lot: well-informed, perhaps; rather articulate—and a very long way from what we were talking about.

LANGUAGE

“Cambodia” or “Kampuchea”?

What’s In a Name?—By ROGER KERSHAW



IT MAY BE a sign of rapidly changing times that a writer on Cambodia should feel bound to offer words of explanation and justification when he calls it by that name in preference to the increasingly fashionable “Kampuchea.”

Southeast Asia has an example, in Siam, of an ancient state institutionalising (in 1939) a more popular and indigenous form, *Prathet Thai* (“country of the Thais”), and enjoining the rest of the world to follow suit with appropriate linguistic modification in 1939. But the practice of the Pol Pot régime of Cambodia was in a distinct and highly xenophobic category. It directed the international community to abandon its varied, national pronunciations of the country’s existing name in favour of something closer to the Khmer pronunciation. There is a parallel in the substitution of “Sri Lanka” for “Ceylon” in 1972, to mark the foundation of a new Republic; but the divergence of the objectionable European renderings from the Sinhalese original had gone much further than ever “Cambodia”, “Cambodge” or “Kambodscha” have drifted from *Kampuchie*.

At all events, the international response to “Kampuchea” has been generally cooperative. Even the BBC has helped to propagate the new usage—not simply in reference to the government or state of Democratic Kampuchea, which Britain recognised until December 1979, but also for the country as a geographical entity and the people in it (who, with the help of an English inflexion, become “Kampuchéans”).¹ In France, however, where neither Democratic Kampuchea nor its successor is officially recognised, both the *RTF* network and the

Paris press have been more conservative and stand by “*le Cambodge*.”

Let me try to explain my own linguistic conservatism in the matter.

FIRSTLY, THERE IS an element of deception in the insistence on a quasi-Khmer pronunciation. Few foreigners realise what they are being “reworded” into. It is widely supposed that the state and people of Cambodia have chosen a new name. But that assumption was not unwelcome to the Pol Pot régime, which wished to project in unambiguous terms the profoundly original nature of power and social values in the new Cambodia as from 1975, its “Year Zero”, or at least since April 1976 when Democratic Kampuchea succeeded to the popular-front government under Prince Sihanouk’s nominal leadership—his *Gouvernement Royal d’Union Nationale du Cambodge*. In accepting the new usage the world was supposed to be made aware of “the Revolution” and thus exposed to subtle suggestion about its legitimacy.

Now I do not dispute the profound revolution of power which occurred in Cambodia in 1975. In that respect I agree with the late Dr Malcolm Caldwell’s remark (*The Leveller*, December 1976) that “what is going on in Cambodia is one of the most significant portents for the future of all ‘free world’ Asian countries. . . .” But the accompanying revolution of social values and concomitant legitimacy of the régime cannot have spread far beyond the ranks of the Communist Party of Kampuchea and its Revolutionary Armed Forces,

¹ *The Times* of London has adapted itself to the “revolutionary” usage, as in:

“The Bring-and-Buy sale in London yesterday raised £10,789 for the Kampuchea appeal organized by BBC television. . . .” (*The Times*, 22 December).

But the American *International Herald Tribune* (Paris) still holds to the conventional older (and perhaps future) usage, as in:

“Former Cambodian President Lon Nol says that he has accepted an invitation from Prince Norodom Sihanouk to discuss forming a coalition to try and win back Cambodia from the current Vietnamese-backed régime. . . .” (*I.H.T.*, 19 December).

ROGER KERSHAW lectures on Southeast Asian politics at the University of Kent at Canterbury.

if the extraordinary level of coercion under "Democratic Kampuchea" is anything to go by. Since the general legitimacy of the Pol Pot régime remains unproven, or even demonstrably non-existent, I prefer to avoid a usage which may have been designed in part to create a contrary impression outside the country.

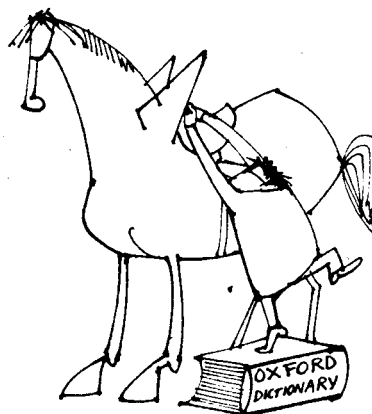
Lest the point about external image-building appears pedantic, I would point to two further aspects of the case. For several years before the victory over the Khmer Republic of Lon Nol on 17 April 1975, the revolutionaries referred to their country as "Kampuchea" in any form of communication in foreign languages; and the new popular front was styled *Front Uni National du Kampuchea*, as if to bring "Kampuchea" into association with the idea of national unity. Subsequently, following victory, it was striking that some Western colleagues more sympathetic to the Pol Pot revolution were early enthusiasts for the new usage. Stephen P. Heder, in an article on "Mistranslations in Counter-Revolutionary Propaganda" in the Australian news-sheet *News from Kampuchea* (August 1977), went so far as to rebaptise the Khmer language "Kampuchean." Again, in the course of a study of ideology and Communist international relations, "The Kampuchean-Vietnamese Conflict" (in the academic annual survey from Singapore, *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1979), Heder even applies the Pol Pot usage anachronistically to Prince Sihanouk's régime of the 1960s.

Some may say that "Cambodia" is also sentimentally anachronistic at the present time. If that is so, I hope to enjoy the same indulgence in this respect as those on the other side of the spectrum. Besides, a case for "Cambodia" has been most ably and authoritatively argued by Prince Sihanouk in a letter written from Pyongyang to his compatriots abroad (reproduced in *Sereika*, August 1979, a monthly bulletin of pro-Sihanouk exiles in Paris). "Cambodia" and other foreign renderings imply no colonialist contempt towards the Khmers, he points out; whereas "*depuis que messieurs les Khmers rouges imposent l'appellation 'Kampuchéa' au monde entier, notre pauvre pays sombre dans les pires malheurs et misères de son Histoire...*" The point is well taken—though the leaders of Democratic Kampuchea might complain that it was Sihanouk who propagated the usage "*Khmers rouges*" against *their* will, both before and after he allied with them in 1970.

The truly odd aspect of the "Kampuchea" terminology is that it is not a *popular* usage among Cambodians, although in no way a neologism. *Srok Khmai* ("land of the Khmers") is the usual term, an analogue of Malaysia's *Tanah Melayu* ("land of the Malays") and Thailand's *Prathet Thai*. *Kampuchie* has overwhelmingly courtly and Brahmanistic connotations. The psychology at the

root of this "non-progressive" symbolism of the *Khmers rouges* is an important subject for speculative enquiry—to explain the whole phenomenon

Linguistic Hot Line



THE BBC was told yesterday that every member of its staff who broadcasts regularly, or is concerned with the preparation of broadcasts, should have a pamphlet giving guidance on the "correct" pronunciation and use of difficult words.

As a back-up service, the BBC should install a "hot line" to the offices of the Oxford English Dictionary—for on-the-spot advice in moments of linguistic crisis.

Dr Robert Burchfield, chief editor of the O.E.D., said he believed that the most contentious areas in ordinary pronunciation could be pinned down to perhaps 20 words which caused the public to become "exercised."

Among them were: CONtrovery (which should NOT be conTROVerry), FORMidable (forMID-able), EXquisite (exQUISite), COMparable (comPARable), disPUTE (DISpute), PRIMarily (primARILY), KILometer (kilOMeter), ADversary (adVERSary), conTRIBute (CONtribute), CAPitalist (capITalist), LAMentable (lamENTable), PREFerable (preFERable), and ALLies (allIES).

He had, he said, heard four different pronunciations of "Cracow." As for the Ayatollah Khomeini, "I have heard every conceivable change rung on that one."

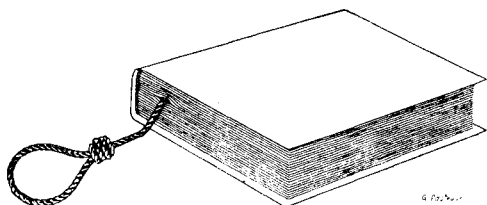
Dr Burchfield said that people should stick to their normal mode of speech, irrespective of the context.

SUCH PHRASES as "I used to paddle my tootsies when I was a kiddywink" and "Put them in an envelope and whack 'em off to us" were cited by Dr Burchfield.

After such "softening up" phrases, Dr Burchfield had heard a Consumer Association spokesman use "quid" instead of pound and "kids" instead of children.

DAILY TELEGRAPH (London)

Block that Quote!



1. "Intellectual Paces"

Washington D.C.

HE DRIVES a gold-coloured Mercedes, went to Harvard on a scholarship, is still only 29. He is a close friend of such active "McGovernites" as Warren Beatty and Shirley MacLaine, and is a true child of the 'sixties, nurtured on television and schooled in the life of the counterculture.

Because he had just been through the intense sociopolitical reading programme that led President Carter to reassess and reinvigorate his Administration through his July 1979 speech on the "crisis of spirit" in America, Caddell put me through the same intellectual paces he had gone through himself to reach his conclusions. . . .

PLAYBOY: *Is the rest of the White House ready for this fight?*

CADDELL: Yes, everything is highly energized all of a sudden. As Mark Twain once remarked, there is nothing like the prospect of hanging at dawn to concentrate your mind the evening before. . . .

PLAYBOY: *Twain's analogy to a hanging may be apt, because it seems to be coming a bit late for Carter. . . .*

"Interview: Pat Caddell, a candid conversation with President Carter's young pollster-adviser"
PLAYBOY (February 1980)

"Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully."

SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Letter to Boswell* (1777), in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, p. 273

"And my poor fool is hang'd. . . ."

"Hang up philosophy! . . ."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE,
in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*,
pp. 454, 478

"There ain't no way to find out why a snorer can't hear himself snore."

MARK TWAIN, *Tom Sawyer Abroad* (1894)

2. As We Then Called It

London

TWO STROKES left President Woodrow Wilson virtually crippled. Government fell increasingly into the hands of his wife and "kitchen cabinet", as we would now call it.

ROGER BERTHOUD, in *The Times*
(London, 22 February 1980)

"KITCHEN CABINET": the coterie of unofficial advisers to President Andrew Jackson (1828-1836).

Dictionary of American History (1978)

3. Crystal Clarity Corrupted

Paris

THERE IS the customary playful Arrabal, mixing the sexes, surrealistic contours, but the message is crystal clear. Arrabal here echoes Lord Bryce's "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

THOMAS QUINN CURTISS,
in the *International Herald Tribune*
(21 February 1980)

"POWER tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

SIR J. E. E. DALBERG,
First Baron Acton
in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*
(2nd ed., p. 1)

4. Green Discovery

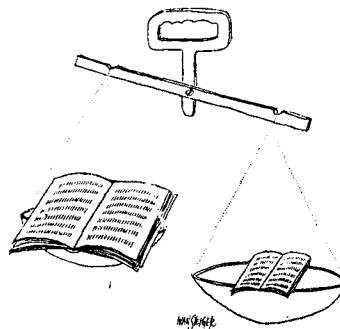
FOR MARY MCCARTHY, every short story is a little act of discovery, and she quotes Hegel: "The tree of life is greener than the tree of thought. . . ." It is for the green fragrance of discovery that her essays will be remembered.

OLIVIA MANNING, in the *Sunday Telegraph*
(24 February 1980)

"Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie/Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum."

"All theory, dear friend, is grey, but the golden tree of actual life springs ever green."

J. W. VON GOETHE, *Faust* (1808),
in *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, p. 223



merely by reference to the transfer of formal legitimacy from a "Royal Government" in 1976 would surely not go far enough. I will not hazard any line of my own but merely point out, and acknowledge, the no less surprising fact that the pro-Viet Nam successor régime to Pol Pot's "Democratic Kampuchea", established by Vietnamese arms in January 1979, styles itself "the People's Republic of Kampuchea." A more complete change of terminology might have communicated a clearer political sense of transformation. That, however, may be precisely the point: the neo-revolutionary régime does not wish to hint at a "Restoration." The People's Republic of Kampuchea is a Marxist-Leninist régime, manned for the most part by the ex-*Khmers rouges* cadres. Its choice of National Day, 17 April (the anniversary of the overthrow of Lon Nol), duplicates and confirms the older practice of "Democratic Kampuchea."

IN ANY EVENT, the world may choose at the present time—and in the main does choose—between two "Kampucheas": that is to say, between two Communist régimes which have adopted the designation "Kampuchea" in their international relations. Pol Pot's régime (though not his guerrilla force) is at an end inside Cambodia but still lives on as an international diplomatic fiction for reasons of Chinese support and Great Power rivalries. Heng Samrin's new régime exists in Cambodia but suffers inferior standing abroad because of its establishment by force and desperate dependence on Viet Nam and the Soviet Union. Neither régime, then, enjoys much legitimate substance. For that matter, the

people of Cambodia themselves (at three million or less and still declining) are no longer a substantial nation—with a disproportionate reduction of the male population and an even more disproportionate disappearance of administratively and technically competent personnel brought about by warfare casualties and deliberate extermination under the *Khmers rouges*. In the words of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, "after the next few months of starvation and slaughter we may have to search outside Kampuchea to find Kampucheans" (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 October 1979).

Such a possibility must be allowed, considering the nature of Viet Nam's new "pacification campaign" against the Pol Pot remnants. That campaign has included a draconian programme of food-denial fit to swell the flood of famine-stricken refugees into Thailand to one million. But if, I suggest, almost the only Cambodians in the world are eventually to be found *outside* the jurisdiction of either of the two "Kampucheas", then we have one reason less for referring to them as "Kampucheans."

When do régimes acquire a moral right to redesignate their people in international nomenclature? Opinions differ. But the case for redesignation is particularly unconvincing if a régime's lack of substance is mainly due to the absence of a population for it to control; i.e. when the régime has been expelled from its own territory, or the people have taken to flight or are dead. What a disjunction between political terminology and social reality!

When all things are so impermanent, surely a well-tryed, politically neutral term like "Cambodia" can still hold its appeal and usefulness.

Love Situation Language



THE Lee Marvin case has highlighted the lack of an adequate word in the English language to describe the growing number of people living together without the benefit of matrimony.

The word "mistress", which has been used frequently in reports of the Los Angeles trial, is dismissed as old-fashioned and sexist by women's libbers. Another reporters' favourite, "lover", is not strictly accurate. People do not have to live together to be lovers.

"Live-in girlfriend" scores on accuracy but loses points for being unwieldy, which is the same problem with the suggested "spouse-equivalent."

"Chamber-mate" and "chamber-fellow" only show how desperate the search for the word can become. "Consort" would be good, but it can also apply to marrieds.

The California Welfare Department un-

romantically calls a cohabiting unmarried either a "URAW" (for unrelated adult woman), or a "URAM" (for a man).

The forthcoming American census will use the almost unpronounceable "POSSLQ" (meaning person of the opposite sex sharing living quarters).

Capital initials also persist in a book of advice for would-be Michelle Marvins, called "The LTR Book", which stands for "Living Together Relationship."

Wits have come up with "HUS" (meaning: husband without a band), but unfortunately the opposite of this is HUSSY. "Sin-in-law" is totally unfavoured.

The best suggestion so far to describe a person "in bedlock but not wedlock" is "Co-Vivant." But even this sounds like "post-nasal drip."

There is, however, the perfect word for the recompense Miss Marvin is seeking from her six years of living with Marvin. It is known around the corridors of the court as "Palimony."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

TRAVEL

A Day On the Jebel

By Suzanne St Albans



THERE IS a clanking of rifles as the tribesmen who have hitched a lift in the Civil Aid helicopter scramble out (no nonsense about ladies first in these parts) and promptly disappear into a cloud of red dust, flying twigs and dead leaves whipped up by the beating of the great pulsating blades.

We have reached our first port of call on the Qara mountain range, on the easternmost part of the Arabian peninsula, overlooking the Indian Ocean. "Ophir" of the Bible, the land of frankincense, is now Dhofar, a province of the Sultanate of Oman; and the Qara mountain range,

shaped like a vast boomerang, forms a kind of barrier, sealing off the coastal plain from the interior desert, and creating a micro-climate unique in Arabia. The vacuum caused by hot air rising out of the scorching Nejd desert behind the Qara range sucks in the moisture-bearing winds which blow off the East coast of Africa. When these swirling, soggy mists hit the Jebel, they condense and fall as a continuous drizzle lasting for the whole of the monsoon season, from June to September.

During this period, visibility is reduced to nil, as a permanent fog envelops the plain of Salalah, shrouding the uplands in heaving rolling clouds. These raging East African winds churn up the Indian Ocean, which can be heard pounding away invisibly on the beach like rumbling thunder. When the monsoon clouds disperse, a marvellous change

has taken place, and the whole province is covered with lush, tender, emerald-green grass. Likewise, the usual bleak desert aspect of the Jebel has also turned to a green carpet spreading beneath the fig trees, the camel thorn, and other scrub of the hills. Deep down in the mountain wadis, entire ravines become luxuriant oases with gushing brooks, and pools and waterfalls, exuberant tropical vegetation, a tangle of soaring lianas and hanging orchids, fleshy ferns, and thick spongy mosses. Among all this, humming birds hover beside huge purple banana flowers, dragonflies dart over the pools, fat yellow wasps swing from side to side like wound-up watch springs, and clouds of butterflies arise from the water's edge at the slightest disturbance.

This little paradise was a battlefield for eleven long and tedious years, during which time many British soldiers lost their lives in a war which hardly anybody has ever heard about—the Dhofar War. This started three months after the then Mr Harold Wilson had decided to withdraw the British Army from Aden. The vacuum was immediately filled by Chinese, then Russian terrorists, and became a fertile anarchists' breeding ground. Oil, of course, was the villain of the piece. The large rich wells of Iran were the objective. The plan was to disaffect the Jebel tribes, and set them up against the Sultan's Armed Forces, destroy morale, wreck the economy, then swarm through the country right up to the Straits of Hormuz, at the entrance of the Gulf, then punch their way through the soft, unsuspecting underbelly of Iran.

The long and dreary war has now been over for more than a year, and to mark its end, the last National Day Parade was held in Salalah, the capital of Dhofar. As a celebration of victory, it was a great triumph, unspoilt by any acts of terrorism, a sure sign that all that side of the affair was well and truly over.

AS SOON AS the guerrillas had surrendered in one area of the Jebel, the government of Oman moved in at once with supplies and medical aid. The idea, in order to discourage the rebels for good and all, was to install an official centre with all possible

speed, which included a clinic, a shop, a school, and the drilling of a well. By now there are 13 such centres in operation on the Jebel. In order to drive home the advantages of liberation, whole pre-fabricated units were flown in and clamped together on the spot; and school benches, beds, cooking pots and other domestic gear came swinging through the sky in the great helicopter net. Although Oman is not one of the very rich oil states, there are enough revenues for a robust policy of reform. The new Ruler, Sultan Qaboos, who came to power in 1970, was determined from the start to wrench his country right out of the Middle Ages, and bring it into the 20th century as soon as could be tactfully and practically done. And the end of the Dhofar war was a God-given opportunity to move right in with much needed medical aid and education, at a crucial moment, a turning point in the history of these primitive, underdeveloped parts.

As no female doctor could be found at first, a male of the species, who was regularly flown up to the Jebel, would have to crouch behind a portable wattle hide, while a couple of nurses "took" the clinic. As the women of the tribes gradually gained confidence and came along with their ailing infants, one of the nurses would describe the nature of the illness in a loud voice over her shoulder to the doctor behind his screen, who would rapidly compute the symptoms and shout back the relevant treatment and the drugs to be administered.

THEN, IN THE FULLNESS of time, came the appointment of the first woman doctor, who now covers every spot on the Jebel, flying hither and thither in a hired army helicopter all through the week. Things have so far improved, and confidence grown to the extent that she is now openly accompanied by a *male* medical orderly, who is universally accepted by the very women who confined the original doctor behind his screen during the first consultations.

And now, a year later, here we are landing on the Jebel, the same medical orderly carrying the medicine chest, a Civil Aid Employee whose mother came from a local Jebali tribe, and who acts as coordinator between Civil Aid in Salalah and the Jebel tribes, and myself as "observer."

Dr Catherine is busy elsewhere today, and Shaun, her husband, also employed by Civil Aid, is in charge of our party. Having decanted us, he flies off to other parts to sort out pressing problems elsewhere. Later, he will return to pick us up, and ferry us to another spot on the Jebel.

WHEN THE DUST STORM has settled, we find ourselves on a wide plateau backed by a high mountain range. Camel-thorn scrub grows

here and there, and under the only ghaf tree sits the Sheikh. Above his head, stretched among the denuded branches, are mats and brightly coloured rags to give shade to those below.

The Jebali, as the tribes of the Jebel Qara are known, are not Arabs, but a race supposedly of Hamitic origin descended from North Africans. They are among the most primitive tribes of the Middle East, still living in caves and mud huts as they have always done. They speak languages of Semitic origin (Shahari, Mahri, Batahri, Harsusi) all of which are quite incomprehensible to the Arabs. Apart from these main divisions, there are innumerable variations on the main themes, such as sub-tribes, sections, clans, which are themselves divided by various blood-feuds, each one speaking a different dialect.

Of the pre-Islamic Shahara tribe, only about 300 survive, all of them servants of the late-comers, the powerful, domineering Kathiri people from the Hadramaut, who have managed to impose themselves as the leading tribe of the Qara range. Of medium height, they are as tough as mountain mules and as nimble as goats; illiterate, but as sharp and bright as you could wish. And like our own distant ancestors, they frequently paint themselves blue all over. In many quite unconnected parts of the world this colour is used as a protection against the evil eye. In Greece and North Africa, for instance, the windows of peasants' and fishermen's houses are painted blue all round the edges. In Turkey it is a lucky colour. In the Camargue, the *gardiens'* shacks are frequently decorated with chips of blue glass embedded in the plaster above the front door. And in present-day Western countries baby boys are often dressed in blue as a matter of course.

THE CLINIC is about to start. A couple of plastic mats are spread on the ground, and the women, who are beginning to come along, are followed by an earnest little troupe of toddlers all bearing a pink card aloft. This is injection day, and they want to know if they are due for another jab. The mothers, who are small and quick-moving as sparrows, squat on the plastic mats, and the orderly opens his medicine chest.

Collecting together a few empty shell cases (the ground is littered with these relics of past battles) I construct myself a little stool to keep out of reach of the scorpions, red ants, and camel spiders of the Jebel. As a woman scuttles past with one of the local pigmy cows in her arms, I grieve at not being allowed to take photographs. But the night before in Salalah the flying doctor had declared very firmly, "I will not have my women upset by photographs so they don't come to the clinic any more!" And that, alas, is that.

A few yards away on the right is a large wattle

and mud hut shaped like an igloo, with a small round door screened by a sack. Crows, hopping about on the roof, snap up an occasional beetle or lizard. The pointed, whiskery face of a rat suddenly pokes out of the roof twigs.

Sweeping the sackcloth curtain aside with her foot, and bending low, the mini-cow-bearing woman disappears into the hut. I whip round, as someone's hot breath is panting down my ear, to find myself face to face with another of those tiny cows, no bigger than a dog. Intrigued by the visitors, a herd is cantering toward us, skipping and scampering around, trampling the rush mat, leaping over the medicine chest, all as agile as goats; and the noble-looking Sheikh is having his face licked by one of these affectionate creatures. Nobody seems to mind them in the least. These little cows are prestigious possessions. The more of them a man owns, the more respected and highly regarded he is. For this reason, among others, it is difficult for the Civil Aid in Salalah to convince the owners to breed larger animals, the idea being not to have a few big handsome beasts, but a multitude of pigmies, amounting to a large herd. It is very much a question of quantity rather than quality. Experiments in cross-breeding with Anglo-Saxon cows have been tried, with disastrous results. So now new schemes are being hatched, with infinite care and regard for the Jebalis' preferences.

Each much-loved cow has her own name and is milked only by her owner, an honour denied to the women who have to content themselves with milking the goats.

Any fall in the yield is of course due to "the evil eye", and this is often cured by the burning and swinging of frankincense. When this remedy fails, the owner applies his mouth to the cow's vagina and blows into it for all he is worth. Soon the stimulation turns her thoughts to milk, and she obliges.

AS MORE AND MORE PATIENTS gather under the ghaf tree, a woman suddenly appears with a calabash brimming with milk. This is handed round, and all take a swig. Remembering what I have been told in Muscat—"That Jebel milk . . . instant TB", I just wet my lips and pretend to swallow.

With regret I notice that the pernicious bottle-feeding practice has already spread to these parts. With the shortage of water, it is impossible to wash out these plastic bottles between feeds, let alone sterilise them, so that they become lined inside with a lethal green scum, causing diarrhoea and dysentery. It is difficult to make the mothers understand the principle of cause and effect. Having discovered bottle-feeding, which allows them to become pregnant again as soon as they have weaned the last infant, nothing will persuade them back to breast-feeding at the moment. In time

of course, this problem will be sorted out, with many others, by the spread of education on the Jebel.

Gradually more women appear from behind the rocks, with a child on one hip, and several others in tow. Scrutinising the toddlers' pink cards, the orderly pats the bearers on the head and says, "No, next week", and then to me, "Too bad, because next week the card will be lost, or eaten by a goat, and then we won't know where we are."

By the end of the hour, there are about 15 women squatting under the tree. Most of them are wearing black *abbas* (cloaks), their handsome faces are unveiled, and most of them sport a gold ring through the nose.

Their fingers and toes are covered with rings, and they are shy, easily disconcerted by a sharp word from the Sheikh. Children mill around hugging first one woman, then another, and it is impossible to tell who the mother is. The little cows skip around merrily, poking their noses into everybody's business, unchecked.

Suddenly there is a great roar in the sky, and we all look towards the East, where our helicopter appears, slowly floating towards us, trailing a huge beam in its wake, wrapped in the meshes of the chopper net. "Moving building materials", remarks the orderly, handing out a bottle of cough mixture. Children are brought to him with sore eyes and ears, chest colds, skin trouble, festering sores. In each case the diagnosis is swift and sure. The drugs are handed to the little patient in person. And when he has received his tube of ointment, or bottle, or syrup, he toddles off, clutching his prize in his right hand, and disappears behind a rock, leaving mother to gossip with her friends.

SQUATTING on my home-made stool of shell-cases I watch, and hold my peace. As the only female member of our party, and knowing my place (I am probably only the second or third European woman these people have ever seen) I try to be as unobtrusive as possible. But the orderly, who knows my mission, has kindly taken me under his wing, and is bent on helping me. The clinic is over, and he speaks to the Sheikh. "*Kittab*", he informs the old man, pointing to me and writing in mid-air. The Sheikh rises and gravely walks towards his hut, inviting me to follow. Behind him, and feeling rather like Alice, I squeeze through the tiny doorway.

Inside, it is surprisingly spacious. You can even stand up quite comfortably. Solemnly, we face each other. I bow, and he bows; then moves to the far end of the hut, obviously his domain. Here are reed mats and leather cushions on the floor. We sit down and there, enthroned on a goat-skin pillow, his back ramrod straight, his legs crossed and his

camel stick laid out before him, he looks as regal as any king. It is quite awesome. With undiminished dignity he whacks away at the rats which come poking through the wattle wall of the hut. I look around with increasing surprise. Outside, the heat was becoming uncomfortable. Here it is cool, fresh and remarkably unsmelly, although the little cow is happily chewing the cud in a corner and half-a-dozen goats skip around the hut. Water skins hang from the ceiling, rifles are stacked round the central kingpost. The kitchen quarters, which are not divided from the Sheikh's apartments by a curtain, as is the custom with the tribes of the Empty Quarter, are neat and tidy, the tin cauldron and trays are clean and shiny, standing in a row against the mud wall. A goatskin cradle, hanging from a roof post, out of the way of ants and scorpions, contains a sleeping infant. Hanging below the cradle are curious racquet-shaped objects made of cow-fur. Intrigued, I ask my host what they are. He explains that they are held out for licking purposes to the cows who are being milked, so that they will be tricked into believing that they are suckling their calf, and so more readily let down the milk.

The chopper appears again, this time to pick us up. Shrinking into ourselves and crouching low like a lot of mushrooms, we huddle away from the rising dust storm. Then, with eyes half-closed and faces shrouded in scarves and *shemags* (those all-purpose headcloths worn by Omani men, used for everything and anything, from making a tourniquet to straining water), we run for it. The blades don't even slow down as we scramble in.

ONLY A COUPLE of Firqats are getting a lift this time, sitting opposite me stony-faced, their rifles between their knees. These men are the ex-rebels who gave themselves up at the end of the war last year, and who are now being paid by the Oman Government to keep watch over the Jebel, and report any sign of untoward activity. The Firqats are in fact a kind of unofficial police, well looked-after, well paid, and provided with as much ammunition as they wish. There are still about 60 rebels hiding away in caves, who have so far refused to surrender; but nobody worries much about them.

WHEN THESE TRIBESMEN were under the sway of the guerrillas in the Yemen, they were quite brutally treated and kept under control by sheer terrorism. If they didn't spy on the Sultan's forces and report on the movement of his troops, if they didn't provide the rebels with food, milk and ready women, they were beaten up, crucified on trees and submitted to various other refinements of torture. The more promising members of the tribe

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*Ivan Fallon,
Sunday Telegraph*

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were sent to "school" in China or Russia to be instructed in terrorist methods, then brought back to spread the good news among their own tribes. This was to be the "end of Islam", which is supposedly a method of enslaving human beings. Those who refused to give up their faith were made to regret it; and anyone found praying was burned with red hot coals applied to the soles of the feet, the back, and the genitals, and then often pitched over the edge of a precipice. We are now dropping on to the Jebel again, and once more there is a clanking of musketry as the Firqats shuffle towards the door of the chopper. As soon as it touches down they hop out and are gone.

OUR SECOND PORT-OF-CALL is a wadi-bed full of scorpions and camel spiders. These unattractive creatures inject you with a shot of pain-killer so that they can eat you alive undisturbed. But as they usually go into action at dead of night, we have nothing to fear at the moment.

There seems to be no Sheikh or Chief here. We settle down under a thorn tree, open up the medicine chest and wait. The helicopter disappears behind a rock. Soon a few women begin to trickle along. They are larger here, more deliberate, very assertive, almost arrogant. They demand medicine and treatment as a right, but one good thing in their favour is the absence of the dreaded feeding-bottle. Most of them are very handsome, with enormous kohl-lined eyes and full lips. None is veiled or masked, but some have lines of indigo blue running over the cheekbone from the nose to the ear-lobe. They look like large, exotic, brightly-coloured moths fluttering with orange, purple, emerald-green and buttercup-yellow veils and *abbas*, as they settle in a circle on the ground around us. The nose ring seems to be universally worn. Gold coins tinkle around their necks, and silver bangles filled with seeds jingle on their wrists and ankles. There are rings on their fingers and their toes, and even the left nostril of little girls is encrusted with silver flowers kept in place with a screw inside the nose. The boys have a pathway shaved right through the hair, going over the top of the skull from one ear to the other, with a cropped fringe in front, and a wild tangle hanging down the back.

As the medical orderly delves into his box, a young man comes loping along, holding his rifle by the business end like a walking stick. Dressed in a short skirt, with one end of it slung over his shoulder like a Greek shepherd of classical times, his long oily hair hangs in ringlets round his neck. His face is painted blue in zebra-stripes and a little tuft of wiry hair decorates his chin. Without a word he joins us, and sits cross-legged with his rifle across his knees. Our orderly addresses him with his usual cheerfulness, but the youth hangs his head, nods once or twice in an absent sort of way

and remains obstinately silent.

"Is he drugged?" I ask.

"No, no", says the orderly, "they don't go in for that around here."

"What's the matter with him then?"

"That's just the way he feels. They are not very friendly around here. Whatever you do, don't let them see your camera."

Perched on another hastily gathered stool of shell cases, I sit as still as a lizard fading into the background, but obviously not altogether successfully, as a boy of about ten begins to throw stones at me, watched impassively by his mother. After a while I pick up a stick and bat the stones away, and the thing turns into a game. The mother relaxes and asks if I have any boys. When she hears that I have three she instantly melts and all the women become very friendly. It seems to be as easy as that to make friends in these parts.

The atmosphere having now thawed considerably, the women forget about me and become engrossed in their own problems. Little shirts are lifted, and horrible sores exposed. I note that infant boys are not circumcised. This is done later, some time before the age of ten, by special tribesmen who specialise in the business. These Jebalis, although they are Muslims, are still very much influenced by witch-doctors; and many pre-Islamic rites and cults still survive.

The sores are largely caused by branding, which is still widely practised as a cure for almost any ailment from TB to snakebite. In the hands of a quack, this treatment can cause infinite suffering, turning to septic sores and gangrene. But when done by a true expert, and applied with judicious care, it is said to have the same effect as acupuncture (now so widely popular in London). When used on the correct spot, at the right depth, with proper regard for timing, it is reported by some to be beneficial, and should never turn septic. This is known as "*wasm*", and is common practice among the Bedu of the Empty Quarter as well.

Soon the usual calabash of warm milk is produced and handed round. But before I have time to indulge in my usual deception, the taciturn young man with the fixed stare surprisingly whisks out a glass which he fills to the brim and hands to me with a strict injunction to drink it down. As I comply under his stern gaze, the orderly remarks sympathetically, "It's all right here. They drop red hot stones into their milk, and it is perfectly sterilised. . ."

The young man hasn't finished with me yet, even though I have obediently swallowed his milk. Standing up, he orders me to follow him. I glance at the orderly who says, "Go with him! He wants to show you his house." And so off we go, with me stumbling after him over the rough stony ground of the wadi bed. Brilliant blue roller birds hop around in the camel-thorn bushes dotted about in the dry

stream, and heavy crows flop among them, looking for lizards and beetles. In the hot purple-blue of the sky, a bird of prey cruises in a wide circle on static wings, looking for dying things.

THE BANKS OF THE WADI are smothered in flowering white jasmine. I pick a sprig of the deliciously scented, thick waxy flowers, which is at once snatched away by my companion, who sticks it behind his ear. Still using his rifle as a walking-stick, he hops nimbly from stone to stone. Round a corner, behind an enormous rock, and shrouded in smoke, a cave suddenly opens up before us, with a wide flat ledge jutting out above it. The *adoo* (enemy), as my companion informs me, used to hang over it and shoot at the occupants inside the cave. And in the monsoon season a waterfall cascades over the edge, forming an impenetrable curtain through which nothing and nobody can pass, except for those inside who know the secret ways of their cave. Now it is sealed off by a screen of acrid smoke rising from a barrage of dung fires burning in a semi-circle round the entrance in guise of mosquito net. Behind this pall, on a bed of dung in one corner, lies an enormous Friesian cow, the only one I have seen on the Jebel. Strung along the rockface at various levels, reached by man-made steps cut in the stone, or its own natural formation, huddle a series of mud huts like a colony of large swallows' nests. My guide points out the homes of his brothers and his cousins. This appears to be a bachelors' dormitory. There are no women or children, no cooking pots or any other signs of domesticity of any kind.

He dives into one of the mud nests, through a tiny entrance hole; and I go in after him, followed by a very thin black cat on high stick legs, with a triangular skeleton head at the end of a long stalk of a neck. At first I can't make out at all why it is so light inside the hut. Then I realise that here at least we are out of the smokescreen of the cave, and moreover, the ceiling of the little hut is made of a loosely woven network of twigs through which pours every bit of light available in the cave.

On the floor is a brightly coloured plastic mat (from Bombay, my host informs me proudly). Down on to it we sink, sitting cross-legged side by side. He seems to be out of his trance. In his own home he is a different person.

From the kingpost a goatskin water bottle hangs, with a rifle lying at its foot, festooned with several bandoliers of cartridges. Apart from this there is absolutely nothing around at all. It is existence pared down to absolute essentials—water, and a gun.

Sitting in cosy silence, we beam at each other for I don't know how long. I seem to have sunk into a trance myself. Eventually becoming aware of this, I stir, and begin to crawl towards the doorhole. As he

follows, I pick my way through the prancing goats of the cave, the dung beetles and the smoke, and we scramble back to the clinic tree as the dust begins to rise beneath the approaching helicopter.

IN A GLADE OF young ghaaf trees we find our next village. In this mud and twig commune like all others, goats no bigger than terriers, swarming everywhere, definitely predominate. The cows are herded inside a stable, made of sackcloth and branches—a few rice bags are strung between the fronds of an ancient ghaaf tree. The communal kitchen is in another tree, from whose branches hang the pots and pans.

Settling down half-way between the two departments, the orderly opens up his box of tricks, which is instantly pillaged by half-a-dozen ravening goats. One of them deftly mouths a tube of Latycin, and before we can take action he has swallowed the whole thing. A large and beautiful butterfly settles on a bottle of aspirin, as a couple of plastic mats are hospitably unrolled for our benefit. Women in black *abbas* begin to arrive, followed by the usual platoon of toddlers. Pills are handed out. Each child bears away his own medicine, one of them chewing his on the spot, carton, wrapping and all. The mothers, who are all conferring together, seem quite unconcerned. A very old man, judging by the raddled state of his skin, exhibits a grey rash on the dark hide of his back. Another ancient warrior with a fearful scar across his chest which appears to have been stitched together with boot-laces, is telling the orderly his business and speaking for the women before they have a chance to utter.

"Any pictures here?" I whisper into the orderly's ear.

"Wait a minute, I will ask", he answers, and then addresses the chief, who is infuriated by the suggestion. He flings his arms about, shouts indignantly, protesting against such unmannerly intrusion. "Do point out that I haven't taken any", I urge the orderly. "I was only asking his permission. Of course I won't if he doesn't like it..." At this he simmers down at once, grins at me, and grabs a minute calf out of the stable. Carrying it tenderly, he strokes the little head, padding off to a ghaaf tree a few yards away. There, still stroking and murmuring soothingly he slits the calf's throat, then slices the head right off. Blood spurts in a great gush, as I stare, horrified. He works with the right hand only (the left being exclusively consigned to other duties), all the toes of both feet and his powerful white teeth. The chief ties the hind legs together and hangs up the carcase on a branch; then, sinking his teeth into the gory neck stump with blood pouring into his mouth, he expertly pulls the little heifer's robe inside out like the vest off a child. With the carcase now hanging limp from the tree, he nicks choice bits of meat off here and there

which he pops, dripping with blood, into his mouth. Are we all going to have to eat it raw, I wonder with an apprehensive shudder. But no, much to my relief, a fire is being lit by the women.

Abdullah, the member of our party whose mother came from this tribe, strolls over to the butcher's corner to give a hand with the chopping-up. The guts are wrenched out, carefully squeezed of their loose green spinach-like contents, and stowed into a gory plastic bag, which will presumably return to Safalah with us on the chopper.

Meanwhile a cauldron of water has been placed on the fire. "They have to walk three miles for every drop of water", the orderly informs me.

"Why don't they camp nearer the well?" I ask, puzzled.

"The land around it probably belongs to another tribe, and anyway they like it up here. In time, the government will drill them their own well. That is one of the good things about the Jebel. Almost anywhere you dig there is water."

A tin tray is brought over, brimming with gory, tattered bits of veal, and splinters of hacked bone sticking out here and there. The whole lot is tipped into the cauldron, and soon it is all bubbling away, with grey scum milling around the surface. Last of all the chief throws in the choicest morsel, the liver of the beast, which sits on top quivering in the steam, untouched by the boiling water.

"It will be ready in twenty minutes", remarks the orderly. We sit in silent expectation, staring at the boiling pot. Now that I know I won't have to eat it raw, I quite look forward to this *blanquette de veau*, Jebel style. The pangs of hunger are clawing at my middle. We are lucky to have veal on the menu today. The Jebalis have very definite ideas about what can and can't be eaten. Lizard, as well as hyena (whose jaw muscles, like a trout's cheeks for us, are a delicacy) are much appreciated. But they won't touch eggs or chicken flesh, nor the meat of wolf, birds of prey, or fox.

Time is up, and the contents of the stewpot are hooked out with a stick and flicked into the waiting tin tray, still gory and caked with dried blisters of blood.

The chief, coming to squat beside me, skewers the raw liver with a twig and flips it into my hand. Overwhelmed by such generous hospitality, I manage somehow to persuade him to split it and have half himself. Stoically, I gulp down my share. It is like swallowing tepid jellyfish. The women have retired to another tree, and a child comes to collect the bones for them. We chew on, and the Chief continues to press delicate morsels, which he tears off the bone with his teeth, into my hand. It is infinitely touching, but I can swallow no more. In desperation, I suddenly remember my manners, and manage to produce an enormous belch to convince him that I have had enough, and have thoroughly enjoyed the feast. He is delighted, and

his belly quivers with mirth.

At last, a distant roar in the sky announces the chopper's return. We shake all the gory, greasy hands of our hosts, and double up with shrouded faces through the rising dust storm, towards our waiting transport.

OUR LAST CALL of the day is at the new school on the beach of Rakhyut, close to the Yemeni border. There on the white coral sands facing the blue immensity of the Indian Ocean, sits the little pre-fabricated school in which the clinic is now being held. This is one of the latest ventures installed in this deserted area by the Ministry of Education, and run by a dedicated Egyptian teacher.

Hastily, the benches are pushed against the walls, and the mothers, who seem to have been expecting us, troop in and squat on the floor, with their children draped around them.

The orderly kneels beside his medicine chest and begins to dole out his wares. There is such a crowd today that he can't manage to keep up the register; so, using an upturned plastic dustbin as his desk, and sitting on an empty ammunition box, with his revolver sticking out on his hip, Shaun writes down the name, diagnosis, and drugs handed out to each child. However busy the clinic may be, this record is always kept up-to-date.

A chorus of crying babies makes it difficult to hear anything at all. A young man of classical looks and distinction, in a spotless sand-coloured dishdasha, and an elegantly rolled Kashmir turban, is the self-appointed doctor's help. Patiently, he plucks the squalling infants from their mothers' arms, and holds them down with gentle firmness as the needle goes in. Four drops of whatever it takes on a piece of sugar immunises against polio. This is achieved without fuss or trouble, but injections are another story. One small girl aged about five puts up an appalling fight against her jab. The young man tries to grab her this way and that, but she is all teeth and claws, and he can't get a proper grip. The girl is quite hysterical, kicking and screaming, with bulging eyeballs. Any minute now she will begin to foam, and we will have a fit on our hands. Wisely, the men give up. The injection, administered in her present state, probably wouldn't do any good anyway. The mother, seeing they have dropped her, deals her a smart blow on the head. The girl gives another piercing yell, then stops abruptly to look around for the next mug who is going to let himself be stabbed by the doctor's needle.

The orderly is besieged by the mothers, who all know exactly what ails their children and inform him what they need (and it is usually aspirin, for anything from skin disease to TB). With infinite patience and good humour he deals with them all.

"I am here to tell you what they need—you are not the doctor", he says over and over again with a chuckle and a wink at the delighted giggling women.

"Diagnosis?" asks Shaun every time, pen poised in mid-air and surveying the bedlam with a mild eye, as the orderly squints at a tongue, feels a pulse, pulls down an eyelid and clamps the stethoscope to a narrow brown chest.

"How do you spell diarrhoea?" suddenly asks Shaun, peering from under his bright red hair and green *shemag* with a frown. As no suggestion is forthcoming, he bends over his dustbin again with a sigh. "Ah well, I guess that will do", he mutters as he scribbles on.

LITTLE BY LITTLE the mothers drift away with their whimpering infants, and suddenly they have all disappeared right out of sight in the bare landscape of sand and sea. Where have they all got to? No sign of Land-Rover or camel or donkey anywhere. They could all have been turned to stone at the wave of a wand. Just as the day's work seems to be over, and the orderly is packing up his box, a man suddenly appears on the scene, leaning on a biblical-looking staff twice as tall as himself. He has come a long way, and his beard is peppered with dust. His four children have all got measles, and his cave neighbour's brood are sure to get it too. He wants medicine for them all. Shaun is worried. The treatment is complicated. Several drugs are involved, and they *must* be administered in the right order. Patiently, the orderly explains the sequence, the dosage, and the nursing involved. The man listens intently as his arms fill up with bottles, powders, ointments. "God", groans Shaun aloud, "how can he ever remember all that?"

"Whatever is going to happen?" I ask, eying the awesome armful of drugs which the man is clutching to his chest.

"*Al Hamda' Lillah*, they will get better in spite of it all", he answers hopefully.

"*Insha' Allah*", I intone piously.

The helicopter is beating its wings and churning up the beach into an angry white cloud which engulfs us all. We run for it, and thankfully scramble aboard. The day's work is done.

Twenty minutes away the Holiday Inn is awaiting us with all its 20th-century comforts. It is a matter of straight from the caveman's world to the sophisticated life of Salalah, with its shops and offices, and ultra-modern television centre, its brand-new hospital equipped with all the latest medical equipment, its model experimental farm, and everything that goes with a vigorous, forward-looking, developing country which is fast catching up with all the blessings of education and technology, and all the more doubtful benefits of the modern way of life.

LETTERS

Ian Fleming or James Bond?

I WAS INTERESTED to see in your September issue a revival in the fascination of Cambridge dons for the serious analysis of the James Bond novels.

The last such offering was in 1972 when David Holbrook, admittedly then seven years on from King's, submitted the public to an 80-page analysis of *Goldfinger* in *The Masks of Hate*. With remarkable zeal he attributed Fleming's success to "the schizoid-paranoid phantasies which relieve the existential anxiety of the modern reader albeit in a false way." He argued forcefully that "Goldfinger is the internalised father's penis" and, somewhat surprisingly, that "Pussy Galore seems to have a penis too."

While continuing to take the Bond novels seriously, David Cannadine ignored the Holbrook theories, possibly through lack of respect or, I suspect, because he had been spared knowledge of them as they were not mentioned in my *Preliminary to a Fleming Bibliography*. For the latter reason he may not have read Fleming's article "How to Write a Thriller" in *Books and Bookmen* in May 1963 in which Fleming stated on successive pages "my opuscula do not aim at changing people or making them go out and do something" and "I take the reader by the throat and stuff him with great goblets of what I consider *should* interest him." Fleming's analysts, therefore, cannot complain of any lack of room in which to manoeuvre.

In the same article Fleming describes how three strong incidents in *Casino Royale* are extracted from his War-time memories in Naval Intelligence, and adds "I think I could trace most of the central incidents in my books to some such real happenings as I have described. . . ." This is interesting in that Fleming's deep involvement in Intelligence could have continued to a lesser extent after the war. Richard Deacon points out in *A History of the British Secret Service* that Randolph Churchill, in discussing the Commander Crabbe affair, would hint in private at Fleming's involvement by references to "Frogman Ian Fleming." (Richard Deacon, who worked with Fleming at Kemsley Newspapers, states that at that time Fleming could not be traced at the Health Farm at which he alleged he was taking a cure.)

WHEN AN AUTHOR has this type of background it is not surprising that the Cannadine analysis of one aspect of the Bond novels should turn out to be "quite extraordinarily patriotic." The patriotic aspect is put into greater perspective by Lycurgus M. Starkey Jr. in a religious book entitled *James Bond, His World of Values* in which he writes "Fleming's novels may reflect the sentiments of modern man more than we realise. The one remaining 'ism' for which many are willing to fight and die is nationalism." The author goes on to quote Adlai Stevenson's address on being chosen "American Patriot of the Year" in 1963: "Our patriotism, our love of country, has to be a discrimination, not a blind force. All too often voices are raised in the name of some superpatriotism to still all criticism." It thus seems

natural to expect an author such as Fleming, writing primarily for a middle-class 1963-type audience, to endow his heroes with patriotism and his villains with a super-nationalism of the nastier kind.

It seems just as natural that Fleming as a journalist would have been very aware of the spate of "England in Decline" newspaper editorials which were published for his type of audience as he wrote his novels, and, while he would have agreed with many of their sentiments and arguments, he also stated "I write, unashamedly, for pleasure and money"—a theme which he emphasised throughout his literary life. Although some have regarded this money emphasis as an inadequate defence of a popular author with such literary friends as Connolly, Plomer, and Edith Sitwell, it is noticeable that Fleming's letters to his friends, and especially to his wife, are written in a completely different vein from the Bond novels or any letter Bond might himself have written.

Thus Fleming may not have been honest when he stated simply: "I write about what pleases *me*, and if there is a strong streak of hedonism in my books it is not there by guile but because it comes out through the tip of my ball-point pen", but was truthful when he said of his novels: "They are written for warm-blooded heterosexuals in railway trains, airplanes or beds."

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES it is difficult to read too much into the Cannadine "England in Decline" arguments.

It is a pity that Mr Cannadine states in the first footnote to his article that all quotations from Fleming's works are from the first London edition. He may recall the incident at the beginning of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* where Bond rescues Tracy from ignominy by paying her gambling debts at the casino and then sleeps with her that night in her hotel bedroom. In the first edition this "the most expensive piece of love" in Bond's life is described as costing two million francs, but in subsequent impressions the cost has soared to twenty million francs.

Perhaps the next analyst of the Bond novels will consider whether a decline in moral values is synonymous with an increase in immoral values?

IAIN CAMPBELL

Liverpool

"Little Differences"

LEOPOLD LABEDZ's attack on William Shawcross and the US "Liberal" Establishment [February] is attractive and specious. It is of course easy and perhaps amusing to make fun of Ms Fonda, but with his saturation-casting of aspersions upon Left critics of greater or lesser intelligence he fails to draw the obvious conclusions: under the spell of their high moral purpose, the preservation of World Peace, the USA tore apart a country not at war with itself. Doubtless they had to destroy it in order to save it. Of course the Khmer Rouge are, or have become, butchers, and the rulers of Viet Nam are no better. And that does not excuse or vindicate the Americans' brutality. The United States' motives may have been higher, but let Mr Labedz note that murder remains murder whoever holds the knife.

FRANCIS FITZ GIBBON

Magdalen College
Oxford

IF Mr FitzGibbon agrees with me that the Khmer Rouge are "butchers" and "the rulers of Viet Nam are no better", then why does he call my strictures directed at the "Left critics" who have been whitewashing them—"aspersions"? Whatever the merits or demerits of the Nixon-Kissinger decision to bomb the "Ho Chi Minh trial" (i.e. the Viet Cong sanctuaries across the border), the clear fact of the matter is that it was not the USA that destroyed Cambodia: it was done by the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese invaders after the American withdrawal. Obfuscation and myth-making will not change this tragic fact. (In this I defend Kissinger whose politics I dislike and censure Shawcross whom I happen to know and like. . . .)

Mr FitzGibbon must learn to make distinctions, which were after all always a strong point of Oxonian subtlety. "Murder remains murder whoever holds the knife"? Well, I do not require reminders. Members of my family were murdered in Hitler's and Stalin's camps. But let me say this: if I had been killed at the front during my Army service in World War II, this would not have been "murder." Such are the relevant "little differences" of world politics. Otherwise there is a wild confounding of Normandy and Auschwitz, Stalingrad and Kolyma, Kissinger's "Cambodia" and Pol Pot's "Kampuchea."

LEOPOLD LABEDZ

Survey Magazine,
London

Goronwy Rees

IT IS with a keen sense of loss that we learn of the passing of Goronwy Rees.

The column by "R" has been to us here, through all these many years, a never-ending source of pleasure, learning and wisdom. We shall sincerely miss its author. And although *ENCOUNTER* without "R" will never be quite the same, continuing reading it will keep him alive in our memory.

May we express our sincerest condolence, and wish *ENCOUNTER* many, many more years of continuing success and excellence.

RUCHAMAH AND ERIC J. GORNITZKY

Tel-Aviv
Israel

"Intellectual Hygiene"

HAVING always subscribed to the notion that cleanliness is somehow close to godliness, we Americans should have something of a divine imperative to go in for the "intellectual hygiene" which *ENCOUNTER* [February] is launching for the 1980s. But we will have our work cut out for us. The ugly litter of the 1960s is still around everywhere, how should we ever get around to dealing with the cultural refuse and ideological junk of the '70s?

Just look at what I find in my *New York Times* of this morning—yet another little unreconstructed sermon from Mr John Leonard, who has for more than a decade now been the literary key-noter of our liberal-left intelligentsia. History has, to be sure, made a mess of all his old radical, romantic, revolutionary preconceptions; but who bothers to clean up after him? He remains loyal

to the "dream of '68", conceding only that the "rhetoric" was better than the "realities", and contending that a man, after all, just has to live with noble hopes.¹ The utopian vision and the revolutionary prospect remain—only a few inconvenient happenings got in the way. This was Leonard's melancholy conclusion after contemplating where all the flowers had gone. . . .

This morning he reviews a novel called *Vida* by Marge Piercy which is all about the American Radical Left in the so-called "Underground", making bombs and plotting a violent end to the System. Leonard vouches for its authenticity but condemns its "stupid politics." He even finds it "ironic" that a book which is passionately dedicated to "the street and alley soldiers" should be published by a capitalist company which is a division of the billion-dollar Gulf & Western corporation.

However, there is still a sneaking admiration for the old heroic War against the Establishment. "Nevertheless", Leonard writes, "consider the smug alternative." And he takes refuge in a quotation from *Standing Fast*, a book of radical political faith by the late Harvey Swados:

"One way or another, we tried to keep an idea alive. There weren't enough of us, there never are. We were ridiculously wrong about a lot of things but who wasn't? And what idea did they keep alive, the others?"

WHAT THE FIRST PRINCIPLE of intellectual hygiene should amount to for John Leonard would be a recognition that it is at once frivolous and monstrous to try and keep an idea alive which consistently (not once, but again and again in this century!) keeps showing itself to be "ridiculously wrong." (Like supporting the liberating forces of Lenin and Stalin, Ho Chi Minh and Pol Pot, who, when victorious, proceed to destroy millions of human beings.)

The second principle of intellectual hygiene would be to recognise that the idea that "the others" tried to keep alive is a healthy scepticism about utopian dreams of liberation, revolutionary claims to humane progress, and the ideological pretensions of an arrogant few who speak in the name of History and Mankind.

A last principle of intellectual hygiene to be recommended to the unreconstructed New Left—who still feel that the valiant "idea" was right, only it was never properly tried—is this: When things go "ridiculously wrong", in point of fact murderously wrong, try facing the tragedy and try making a modest little contribution to cleaning up the horrid mess. (Like with some honest self-criticism.)

MARTIN LONGMAN

New York City

¹ Nine years ago in a *New York Times* article, John Leonard wrote:

"Who's got the revolution? . . . The perfectibility of man is really all we have to sustain us, however illusory it may prove to be. . . . Society must decide what it wants, what it wants to be, where it wants to go. . . . That we haven't, of course, decided. Until we do so, the rest is rhetoric, and the romantics have the best rhetoric." (*International Herald Tribune*, 2 December 1971).

Einstein's Blessing

In "Remembering Einstein" (ENCOUNTER, April 1979), Esther Salaman wrote:

"A pleasanter experience was when two orthodox Jews from Poland arrived: they said it prolonged life to shake hands with the great Jew. I told Einstein this.

There was a peculiar look in his eyes, and I was anxious to know what he was thinking. I had been embarrassed by the men's rhetoric, but now I was annoyed with myself for not having translated word for word; I had not told him that they had also said that it is a blessing to set eyes on a king. . . ."

It would be interesting to know what language Esther Salaman was translating from—Polish? Yiddish? Hebrew, perhaps? It seems to me not unlikely, indeed almost certain that what the visitors had done was to recite the Hebrew blessing, "*Shehyanu*":

"Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who hast maintained us alive and preserved us in existence and brought us to this time."

and then the blessing on beholding a King:

"Blessed art thou . . . who has bestowed some part of thy honour on [a man of] flesh and blood. . . ."

It was not shaking hands with Einstein that would prolong their life. The blessings were the Lord's for prolonging their life till they were privileged to set eyes on Einstein, and for bestowing on Einstein a part and partake of His glory.

In his recent book, *Disturbing the Universe*, the nuclear scientist Freeman Dyson talks of the mythical figures of a Deliverer and a Destroyer. "The best and most genuine Deliverer in my lifetime was Albert Einstein. His special quality was universally recognized, although it is not easy to describe in words. . . ." The Polish Jews had words for it, the "rhetoric" in the ancient blessings. Einstein was not at all remote from his Jewish background though he was of course not orthodox; and it is not unlikely, perhaps almost certain, that he was perfectly familiar with "*Shehyanu*", the blessing pronounced on the occasion of any truly welcome event. Perhaps the "peculiar look" in his eyes was for the young Russian Jewess who did not recognise "*Shehyanu*" when she heard it.

DAFNA ALLON

Jerusalem
Israel

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MRS ALLON ASKS what language the two Jews who came to see Einstein spoke. They spoke Yiddish with many Hebrew words. I knew both (I had spent two years in Palestine) but Einstein knew little or none of either. Of course I should have recognised the *Shehehyanu* (not "*Shehyanu*", by the way). If the men said it, they did so silently. I cannot remember all their words, but Einstein was clearly touched by what I translated for him. His "peculiar look" was for *them*, not for me.

ESTHER SALAMAN

London

AUTHORS

John Wansbrough is Reader in Arabic at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and author of a forthcoming study of mythopoeisis.

Anthony Hartley was for several years the editor of *Interplay* in New York, and is now Deputy Head of the Commission of the European Communities in London. His books include *A State of England* (1963) and *Gaullism* (Routledge, 1973), and he is co-editor of *The Penguin Book of French Verse* (1975). His articles in *ENCOUNTER* include "Elie Halévy and England Now" (January 1975) and "America's Trillions and Neuroses" (January 1977).

Ralf Dahrendorf is Director of the London School of Economics. He was previously Professor of Sociology at the Universities of Tübingen and Konstanz, and was a Member of the Commission of the European Communities at Brussels from 1970-74. His books include *Class and Class Conflict in an Industrial Society* (1959), *Essays in the Theory of Society* (1968), *Homo Sociologicus* (1973), and the BBC Reith Lectures, *The New Liberty* (1975), all published by Routledge. His latest book, *Life Chances*, is published this spring by Weidenfeld in Britain and University of Chicago Press in the USA. His article is based on an address delivered at Frankfurt-am-Main—Goethe's birthplace—during the presentation of the Goethe Prize to Raymond Aron.

François Bondy is an editor of the monthly *Schweizer Monatshefte* and of *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich).

Isabel Quigly is a translator and critic, and for ten years reviewed films for *The Spectator*. Her article on the myths of cinema, "The Glory and the Dream", appeared in the January 1975 *ENCOUNTER*.

Robert Wistrich, Editor of *The Wiener Library Bulletin*, is a Research Fellow at University College, London. He is the author of *Revolutionary Jews from Marx to Trotsky* (Harrap, 1976) and of *The Left Against Zion* (Valentine Mitchell, 1979). His article "A Neo-Revisionist Renaissance: Back to Eduard Bernstein?" appeared in the June 1978 issue of *ENCOUNTER*.

Asa Briggs is Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, and was from 1967-76 Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex. He was created a Life Peer in 1976. The fourth volume of his monumental *History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* appeared in 1979 (Oxford University Press), as did his *Governing the BBC* (BBC Publications). His many books on the Victorian era include *Victorian People* (University of Chicago Press), *Victorian Cities* (Penguin), and *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867* (n.e. Longman, 1979).

David Miles, Deputy Director of the Oxford Archaeological Unit, is the author of *The Upper Thames Valley* (1974) and *Introduction to Archaeology* (Ward Lock, 1978). He is Secretary of the Council of British Archaeology's Countryside Commission and Archaeological Adviser to the National Trust.

John Bossy is Professor of History at the University of York. He is the author of *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850* (1976), published in Britain by Darton Longman & Todd and in the USA by Oxford University Press; a paperback edition appeared in 1979.

Charles Thomas is Professor of Cornish Studies, University of Exeter, and Director of the Institute of Cornish Studies. His publications include *Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times* (Thames & Hudson, 1971) and *Early Church Architecture of North Britain* (Oxford University Press, 1971). He is completing a study of *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500*, to be published by Batsford.

Martin Esslin is Professor of Drama, Stanford University, and was from 1963-77 Head of Radio Drama at the BBC. He is the author of many books on the theatre, including *Brecht: A Choice of Evils* (1959, n.e. Eyre Methuen 1980), *Anatomy of Drama* (n.e. Abacus, 1978), and *Antonin Artaud* (John Calder and Fontana, 1976), and edited the *Thames & Hudson Illustrated Encyclopaedia of World Theatre* (1977).

Norman Hampson is Professor of History at the University of York. His books include *A Social History of the French Revolution* (Routledge, 1963), *A Concise History of the French Revolution* (Thames & Hudson, 1975), *The Life and Opinions of Maximilien Robespierre* and *Danton* (Duckworth, 1976, 1978).

The Duchess of St Albans is the author of three volumes of autobiography (W. H. Allen, 1974-77), and of *Green Grows the Oil*, published in 1979 by Quartet Books, who on 26 May bring out her portrait of Oman, *Where Time Stood Still*, from which this article is an extract. She is completing a book on Provence, where she now lives.

The **Arthur Koestler** series, "Antennae", will be resumed next month.

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Life & Letters Today

London

WRONG-HEADED: Count Ladislav de Hoyos, who still takes offence at being accused of mistaking a plural for a singular, writes from Mexico:

Yet there it is: all over the world, the same highly educated people and the same highly civilised media that would never be caught pronouncing or printing such gobbledygook as, say, "growth per annos" or "costs per dies" happily use the term "per capita" when what they mean is, of course, "per caput"—just as in plain English it is "per head" and not "per heads."

For some unfathomable reason, the Latin singular (though in this context the only grammatically correct form) is thought by many to sound affected or pedantic and so has quite unjustly fallen into disuse.

I am writing in the hope that your influential newspaper may be willing to lend a hand in discouraging the use of a misconception which is as painful as it is unwarranted, time-honoured though it may have become in the capita of those who occasionally seem to forget that each individual has but one caput.

FINANCIAL TIMES

Bonn

SOMA-SEMANTICS: The human body consults a kind of lexicon when it searches for the correct anti-toxins to combat an infection. This was the concluding analysis of a scientific working group at the Max Planck Institute for Experimental Medicine in Göttingen. The "biological dictionary" is hereditary and is passed on from generation to generation. The human body does not have to resort, in crisis, to inventing anything new. The system of consultation is almost an intellectual achievement. It makes distinctions between the new and the old, between the strange and the familiar, when it comes to immunisation and self-protection from dangers. It "files away" items like whooping cough, chicken pox, and German measles; and the alphabetic filing system is so good that for that reason almost all children's diseases, once had and registered, never recur again. The dictionary works, defines, registers, controls.

DIE WELT

New York

OBSOLETE: Crises always generate platitudes, but sometimes turn up useful old words or bright coinages.

A reader suggested "androlepsy" to describe the Iranian crisis, driving me to the second edition of Merriam-Webster's New International Dictionary: "The seizure by one nation of the subjects of another ... to enforce some right claimed by the former against the latter."

The obscure term was dropped in the third edition by lexicographers who evidently presumed the practice and its description had disappeared from civilization.

NEW YORK TIMES

London

TYPING ERRORS: For me [writes Richard Last, TV critic] the BBC's educational series "Russian—Language & People" is at its best when educating me to realise that what I had previously read as "pectopah" is actually Cyrillic for "restaurant," and that "typnet" is not a typing error but translates as "tourist."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

I AM surprised and sorry that pro-feminists among the Roman Catholic clergy should not be aware that the English word "man" is not always masculine. It stands for the word "one," in the same way as the German word "mann." Mann sagt, or Mann ist means one is.

Mankind means everyone—when the ship is sinking, the cry goes up "Man the lifeboats"—meaning everyone to the lifeboats. There are some today who might prefer "Person the lifeboats." It is a pity that English and the origins of our language are no longer taught at schools.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

London

HANDWRITING ON WALL: Perhaps those of us who believe in trouble-shooters can all stop worrying about Afghanistan and take comfort from the following manifestation on a wall in Bermondsey Antique Market. On it is the scrawl:

"John Wayne is dead."

Underneath it in another and altogether more ghostly hand is:

"The hell I am."

EVENING STANDARD

London

CHINK: It was a pleasant change yesterday to see a few smiles around the Department of Employment, welcoming the return of the famous "Chinese electrician."

There was a time, 10 years or so ago, when this Oriental Djinn was reported present at every 11th-hour

management-union confrontation. Cynicism and lack of faith have driven him away for many years but clearly there is a renewal of faith for "The Times", reporting latest moves in the steel strike, yesterday announced in headline type "CHINK OF LIGHT EMERGES..."

DAILY TELEGRAPH





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